

July & August 2010, *Equipping* #108

Download the current issue of Equipping at www.mennonitechurch.ca/resources/equipping/current/
Download back issues of Equipping at www.mennonitechurch.ca/resources/equipping/

In preparation for upcoming months,

we have included material for Heritage Sunday, Mission Sunday and World Communion Sunday. You may also wish to note the pastor salary guidelines, which have been updated for 2011. We also offer our best wishes to Jack Suderman our outgoing General Secretary, as he prepares for the next phase of his life. We are grateful for his many years of service to the Church. We wish him well in the next phase of his life and thank him for his wonderful years of service with Mennonite Church Canada.



Leanne Plett
Equipping Coordinator

Leanne Plett – Equipping Coordinator

Inside this issue of Equipping:

Mennonite Church Canada

- *Gratitude and Blessings* – Robert J. Suderman
(pastors, leaders, bulletin boards, newsletters)
- *Prayer, Notes & News* – July & August 2010
(bulletin announcements, newsletters, worship planners, leaders)

Christian Witness

- 2010 Burkina Faso Learning Tour poster (Mennonite Church Canada)
(for bulletin boards, church offices, etc.)
- *July Celebration Story: Relationships Aid Relief*
(bulletin boards, leaders, worship planners, and church newsletters)
- *August Celebration Story: Homecoming of Faith*
(bulletin boards, leaders, worship planners, and church newsletters)

Support Services

- *Introduction, Background and Tips*
(pastors, leaders, bulletin boards, newsletters)
- *Pastors Salary Guidelines*
(pastors, leaders, bulletin boards, newsletters)
- *Pastor's Memo of Understanding*
(pastors, leaders, bulletin boards, newsletters)
- *Pastors Salary Scale Worksheet*
(pastors, leaders, bulletin boards, newsletters)

Christian Formation

- *Sticking Together* – Dave Bergen
(pastors, leaders, bulletin boards, newsletters)
- *Setting the Welcome Thermostat* – Sarah B. Drummond
(pastors, leaders, bulletin boards, newsletters)
- *Resource Update No. 7*
(for worship planners, teachers, pastors, education committees, librarian, etc.)
- **Special Sunday Worship Resources**
View and download the entire Special Sunday grouping: www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/482
(for worship planners, teachers, pastors, education committees, librarian, etc.)
 - **Assembly Sunday**, July 4
 - **Sunday School Promotion Sunday**, Sept. 12
 - **International Day of Peace**, Sept. 19 – Online only
 - **Publishing Sunday**, Sept. 26 – This Special Sunday Worship Resource is on hold for this year and will reemerge, next year, on September 11, as *Christian Formation Sunday and will emphasize* the ministry of Christian nurture and education through congregational formation activities, publishing, and church schools.
 - **World Communion Sunday**, Oct. 3
 - **Mennonite Heritage Sunday**, Oct. 31
 - **Mission Sunday**, Nov 14
- **Online Children's Stories** (based on lectionary readings)
(for worship planners, teachers, pastors, education committees, librarian, etc.)

Extending our Faith

- Faith and Life Fall order form - hard copy only
(for Christian education committees, pastors, lay leaders, worship planners, Sunday School teachers)
- Faith and Life *Talkabout* pamphlet - hard copy only
(for Christian education committees, pastors, lay leaders, worship planners, Sunday School teachers)
- *The Parish Paper*
(for worship planners, teachers, pastors, education committees, librarian, etc.)
 - July 2010: "Should Our Congregation Use Internet Social Media?"
 - August 2010: "How Much Should We Pay Our Pastor?"



Robert J. Suderman,
General Secretary,
Mennonite Church Canada

July/August 2010, *Equipping* #108

Gratitude and Blessings

Scripture reminds us that “there is a time for everything.” Ecclesiastes suggests there is a certain cyclical rhythm to life – that there is “nothing new under the sun,” and that human and natural events move in a circle. What we experience now is what we – or someone else – have experienced before. There is comfort in this perspective, and we humbly acknowledge our part in this cycle.

This perspective is with me as I write to you this last time as General Secretary of Mennonite Church Canada. The time has come; many others have gone before me into active retirement; it is not new; the world and the church will go on.

And yet, there is something within me that rebels at these thoughts. Yes, the time has come. But it is also new – for me, and for others. I have never done this before. My wife and my family have never experienced me before in this new stage of life. It doesn’t just feel cyclical: it feels – at least a bit – linear. It is a past that will not return: the mistakes I’ve made cannot be undone; the unfinished tasks will be left to others; the unwise things I’ve said are in the wind and bearing their fruit; the particular gifts I’ve offered are, I trust, also growing in the lives of others.

And before us lies a future that has not been before either. Both as a person and as a church we are moving into territory that is new; it is

not simply recycled from the past. Genuinely different paradigms are awaiting our wisdom; and new opportunities await our energies. The “whole creation groans, waiting for the revealing of the children of God.” So, in a real sense, there is an irretrievable past that is now our heritage and legacy; and there is a never-before known future that awaits our faithfulness.

In all this, I ask for forgiveness where my efforts have not measured up to the expectations you may have had for me. But I also ask that we recognize the over-abundance of blessings that God pours into our lives – so that we can respond with awe-inspired gratitude at the privilege we have to be God’s church, in Canada, in the 21st century.

I am very pleased with the appointment of my successor, Willard Metzger. We have worked very closely together over these last 10 years as he led Mennonite Church Canada’s Christian Witness Council. God has gifted him richly, and I am confident that his gifts will be used to strengthen the church. I trust that you will embrace him, anoint him with your prayers, and support him as he begins to lead the church further into this challenging century.

May God’s face continue to shine over us all.



**Mennonite
Church
Canada**

Equipping Prayers Notes News

A resource packet for equipping Mennonite Church Canada pastors and leaders

600 Shaftesbury Blvd
Winnipeg MB R3P 0M4
Toll free 1-866-888-6785
P: 204-888-6781
F: 204-831-5675
E: office@mennonitechurch.ca
www.mennonitechurch.ca

Please insert these prayer requests and notes into your bulletin.

Remember, you can also find these at www.mennonitechurch.ca/equipping for easy "cut and paste" insertion.

July 2010, Equipping #108

| Sunday dates | Prayers: Please pray for and with the Church | Ministry Notes: This is how your financial support of Mennonite Church Canada is ministering...from across the street to around the world | News/Announcements: Stay in tune with the wider church |
|-------------------|---|--|---|
| July 4/10 | Pray that the Holy Spirit will bless and encourage Tim and Cindy Buhler and daughter Kristyn, Mennonite Church Canada workers in Macau, as they prepare to leave after serving for several years, and for George and Tobia Veith, with Michael and Marika, as they return to Macau to resource a wider network of Anabaptist churches in the region. | We are grateful to God for the cheerful and willing support of those who volunteered in a variety of ways to help coordinate Mennonite Church Canada Assembly 2010. Your encouragement and willingness to serve makes possible this important gathering of our church family. | Mennonite Church Canada is partnering with SERVE Nazareth, a program for people age 18 and over who wish to learn about and build relationship with the church in the Holy Land. Applications for the six-month winter program are being accepted until July 21. For more information, check out the poster on your church bulletin board, look online at http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1368 , or call 1-866-888-6785 and ask for Kirsten Schroeder in the Human Resources office. |
| July 11/10 | As Delegates to Mennonite Church Canada Assembly 2010 return to their congregations, pray that God will continue to stir within them a passion for God's church, a desire to share what they learned through the time of national fellowship, and a strengthening of personal faith. | Your support of Mennonite Church Canada ministries has nurtured flourishing relationships with sister churches in Chile – and those relationships played an important role in establishing relief aid following the earthquakes that struck in February. Working under Special Assignment with Mennonite Church Canada, Titus Guenther introduced Mennonite Central Committee reps to Anabaptist church leadership so that together, they could determine appropriate responses. Thank you for helping to build and serve the global church. | Explore Burkina Faso in a way that no tourist could and experience the life and witness of a developing Church community. A Mennonite Church Canada Learning Tour to Burkina Faso will take place Feb. 17 – 28, 2011. As they become available, more details will be posted at www.mennonitechurch.ca/getinvolved . |
| July 18/10 | Northern Cheyenne Mennonite Churches are hosting the Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA bi-annual Native Assembly from July 19-22. Forty to 50 people from Canada and many others from across North America will gather in Montana under the theme "I Am the Potter; You Are the Clay". Please pray that this event will inspire new and vital relationships and strengthen identities in Christ. | Mennonite Church Canada's Resource Centre is part of a new Anabaptist Resource Consortium, creating an online inter-system loan service together with Columbia Bible College Library (B.C.), Mennonite Church Eastern Canada Library (Ont.) and Mennonite & Brethren in Christ Resource Centre (Ont.). Thank you for supporting the Resource Centre and contributing to the multiplication effect of shared resources! | Mennonite Church Canada News Service brings you breaking news and a wide variety of stories about the many ways in which you empower Mennonite Church Canada and workers around the world to engage in being the church at home and abroad. News stories can be delivered regularly to your inbox by subscribing at http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/news/releases/subscribe/ |

"For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. 3:11



**Mennonite
Church
Canada**

Equipping Prayers Notes News

A resource packet for equipping Mennonite Church Canada pastors and leaders

600 Shafresbury Blvd
Winnipeg MB R3P 0M4
Toll free 1-866-888-6785
P: 204-888-6781
F: 204-831-5675
E: office@mennonitechurch.ca
www.mennonitechurch.ca

Please insert these prayer requests and notes into your bulletin.

Remember, you can also find these at www.mennonitechurch.ca/equipping for easy "cut and paste" insertion.

July 2010, Equipping #108

| Sunday dates | Prayers: Please pray for and with the Church | Ministry Notes: This is how your financial support of Mennonite Church Canada is ministering...from across the street to around the world | News/Announcements: Stay in tune with the wider church |
|-------------------|---|---|--|
| July 25/10 | Please pray that God will bless and empower the decisions made at the World Religions Summit 2010, which took place June 21-23 in Winnipeg. At that event, 80 religious leaders of the world's most prominent faiths gathered to hold G8 nations accountable for the pledges made in 2000 to support eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) intended to help end global disparity. | The Strategic Task Force for Pastoral Leadership Development, which includes representation from our post secondary schools and the Area Churches, has begun its work to map out a plan that will provide sufficient and qualified pastors and congregational leadership for Mennonite Church Canada for the next two decades. Your giving makes it possible to plan for the future leadership needs of the church. | The Executive Committee of Mennonite Church Canada's General Board invites you to join your voices in thanking God for the upcoming service of Willard Metzger as the next General Secretary of Mennonite Church Canada. Current General Secretary, Robert J. Suderman, retires in August. |



Equipping Prayers Notes News

A resource packet for equipping Mennonite Church Canada pastors and leaders

600 Shaftesbury Blvd
Winnipeg MB R3P 0M4
Toll free 1-866-888-6785
P: 204-888-6781
F: 204-831-5675
E: office@mennonitechurch.ca
www.mennonitechurch.ca

Please insert these prayer requests and notes into your bulletin.

Remember, you can also find these at www.mennonitechurch.ca/equipping for easy "cut and paste" insertion

August 2010, Equipping #108

| Sunday dates | Prayers: Please pray for and with the Church | Ministry Notes: This is how your financial support of Mennonite Church Canada is ministering...from across the street to around the world | News/Announcements: Stay in tune with the wider church |
|--------------|--|---|---|
| Aug 1/10 | Mennonite Church Canada Witness workers Todd and Jeanette Hanson and their daughters Kate and Claire are returning to China after two years of North American ministry. Please pray that this dedicated family will find peace, joy and a sense of belonging to God's wider church as they transition. | <p>If you've ever gone through the process of searching for a pastor, you've probably used some of the materials Mennonite Church Canada provides – like Ministerial Leadership Information (MLI) forms that help churches and pastors assess their experience and gifts relative to congregational expectations. We also offer Pastor Salary Guidelines. Your support helps us help you!</p> <p>One of Mennonite Church Canada's top three priorities is to form a people of God. Thank you for providing the financial support that enables Mennonite Church Canada to provide and develop uniquely Anabaptist materials to assist in Christian formation. To review available materials, see http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/524</p> | None at this time |
| Aug 8/10 | Willard Metzger, formerly Chair of Christian Witness Council, has been appointed to the role of General Secretary. He will succeed outgoing General Secretary Robert (Jack) Suderman, who served in the post since 2005 and will retire this summer. Please pray for the Holy Spirit to guide each of these men as they consider new and changing service to God's church. | | |
| Aug 15/10 | Canadian Mennonite University student, Coreen Froese, is undertaking a practicum with Mennonite Church Canada this summer to gather data about services available to Aboriginals within the city of Winnipeg. This data will help Native Ministry and local Mennonite congregations build stronger cross-cultural relationships in urban areas. Pray that God will bless Coreen's work and inspire new insights into ministry for others across Canada | | |
| Aug 22/10 | This month, Erv and Marian Wiens begin a 2-year assignment with Mennonite Church Canada as Resource Workers to serve at the Korea Anabaptist Centre (KAC) in Seoul, South Korea. Sarah Blackwell also begins a 2 year assignment teaching English at KAC. Sarah is going with her husband, Sam, who is employed as an English teacher in Seoul. Please pray for energy and inspiration for these couples as they settle into their new roles. | | |
| Aug 29/10 | Pat and Rad Houmphans have returned to northeast Thailand for another term of service after having been on North American Assignment for 10 months. As the Borabu congregation is growing, the Houmphans expect to relocate to another town where church planting efforts will continue. Please pray for the Houmphans as they minister to God's church during a time of political unrest in Thailand. | | |

July 2010, *Equipping* #108

Relationships aid relief

Although Mennonite Church Canada does not operate as a relief organization, its priority of forming a global church has nurtured relationships that played a vital role in bringing aid to Chile following a devastating series of earthquakes that began on February 27, 2010.

Titus Guenther, Associate Professor of Theology & Missions at Canadian Mennonite University, has served as a Mennonite Church Canada Witness Special Assignment Worker to Chile on a number of occasions. He undertook another Special Assignment from April 18 to 27, 2010 to connect Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) representatives César Flores (Bolivia) and Eduard Klassen (Paraguay) with Chilean Anabaptist church leaders. Together, they discussed potential MCC earthquake relief assistance.

As a result of strong, ongoing relationships, Mennonite Church Canada partners were able to provide MCC with valuable information for determining appropriate relief aid and distribution.

Guenther reported that although they witnessed great devastation during their tour of the affected region, in some areas much of the debris had already been cleared away.

“In one city 24 entire blocks of irreparably damaged buildings had to be bulldozed leaving a flat open space,” he said. “Whole settlements of temporary wood structures are being set up for families who lost everything. Amidst this situation, we heard stories of persons whose homes had collapsed or been swept away going to worse hit areas in order to offer what assistance they could.”

“In reality, God has shown us great mercy because, really, very few people died [in the horrific earthquake],” said Carlos Gallardo, Pastor of Puerta del Rebaño in the hard-hit Concepción area.

Guenther reported that churches are aware of the long and arduous road ahead. Work continues on restoring services such as electricity, water and garbage removal, as well as bridge and road repair.

“We invited all sister churches to fill out reconstruction project forms in order to apply for Mennonite Central Committee’s relief funds” he said.



Tim Froese, Mennonite Church Canada’s Mission Partnership Facilitator for Latin America said that, “It was inspiring to see aid facilitated by multiple church relationships in the affected area, the depth of experience and availability of Titus in Chile, and the collaboration, resources and expertise of MCC working together. When church partners respond to emergency situations as they did in Chile, we see a fine example of what it means to be the global church.”

Praise God for love and service that extends beyond borders!

We invite you to share with your congregation the following story from Chile, where Mennonite Church Canada has established strong relationships with three distinct groups of Anabaptists and Mennonites. These include the Union of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Chile (UBACH), the Evangelical Mennonite Church and the Puerta del Rebaño congregation in Concepción. The story should take no more than 2 minutes to read aloud. You might also wish to include it in your church newsletter.

Homecoming of faith

August 2010, *Equipping* #108

Pastor Jonathan Yin, recently ordained for ministry, called his encounter with Anabaptist theology more than a decade ago a “homecoming of faith.”

While pastoring in Beijing, a fellow Chinese pastor in Sichuan told Yin to “check out these Mennonites, I think you could get excited about what they are teaching.” Yin connected with Mennonite Church Canada Witness workers and was given the opportunity to study Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) in Elkhart, IN.

Pastor Yin says that many Chinese intellectuals see a disconnect between Christian faith and life, calling it a hypocritical religion with followers who ignore Jesus’ teachings. Christianity and Western imperialism are still closely linked in the minds of many Chinese. To correct a huge trade imbalance in the 1800s, Western gunboats forcibly opened Chinese ports to accept trade – and the missionaries who at times actually rode in on those gunboats. Anabaptist rejection of gunboat power presents a new and different view of Christian faith that is attractive to Christians and non-Christians alike.

“Belief and actions, faith and life must be congruent. We don’t see the ‘crook with a good heart’ hero in our movies,” says Li Ou, Peking University graduate and a professor of comparative culture. “We just can’t admire someone like that.”

Modern theological emphasis in the Chinese church focuses on sacrifice, atonement, and forgiveness, concepts borrowed from Western theology. This approach does not resonate well in Chinese culture, where one monitors his or her actions through the perspectives of others. A focus on ethics and on the life of Jesus in Christian teaching is more in accord with Chinese thinking.

Pastor Shi, who recently encountered Anabaptist beliefs, works with Yin and other church leaders in China to form missional congregations. Shi said that in Chinese cultural belief, religious faith changes every aspect of life and behaviour. “If you explained to a Chinese intellectual that because of your faith you refuse to take another’s life, they would say, ‘Of course,’” Shi explained. “This is an inevitable conclusion in the minds of those steeped in traditional Chinese culture.”



Wang Ying, former International Volunteer Exchange Program (IVEP) volunteer and founder of the non-governmental organization, Peace in China, said, “One thing I and other young Christians I knew struggled with was how ‘Christian’ nations could participate in wars, when we saw something so different in Jesus’ teachings.”

Praise God for these and other church leaders who are encouraging Mennonites to gift the larger church in China and around the world with this perspective of Christianity so that many more will experience “coming home.”

We invite you to share with your congregation the following story from Jeanette Hanson. Jeanette and her husband Todd with their two children have been Mennonite Church Canada Witness workers to China since 1994. Presently in Vancouver on a North America ministry assignment, the Hanson family will return to China in the summer of 2010. The story should take no more than 2 minutes to read aloud. You might also wish to include it in your church newsletter.



600 Shaftesbury Blvd
Winnipeg MB R3P 0M4
T: 204-888-6781
F: 204-831-5675
E: office@mennonitechurch.ca
W: www.mennonitechurch.ca

July/August Equipping #108

Pastor's Salary Guidelines for 2011

Introduction, Background & Tips

These Salary Guidelines come to you after consultation with and within the Area Churches of Mennonite Church Canada. They are intended to provide some uniformity across the denomination while allowing for adjustments based on the local cost of living. Following a major review in 2010, the guidelines will undergo future minor annual revisions based on feedback received from pastors, congregations, and area churches. The salary scale figures are adjusted annually on the basis of the Consumer Price Index.

A national guideline has limitations, and does not work equally well across the country. We publish a national guideline because we believe that we should strive for common understandings and equitable compensation for all pastors in Mennonite Church Canada. At the same time, we encourage pastors and congregations to adapt it to particular circumstances. We are aware that not all congregations are able to pay this much and that others believe their pastor(s) warrant(s) a higher salary. Likewise, some pastors may have personal or family needs that are greater while others are willing to accept less than the guidelines, in light of a congregation's financial circumstances. Congregations should be aware that when a pastor chooses to accept less than the guidelines, this can complicate salary negotiations with subsequent pastors who may not be able or willing to do the same.

Where a congregation is unable to afford the guidelines and the pastor finds the congregation's offer inadequate, it will often be possible to use these guidelines to define an appropriate full-time salary and then release the pastor to supplement the congregation's offer with other employment up to the equivalent of a full-time salary.

A few tips regarding pastor's salary negotiations:

- Recognize the covenant relationship that exists between a congregation and its pastor(s), which makes it more than an employer/employee relationship.
- Salary negotiations should take place in private conversation with two or three persons designated by the congregation rather than in a public setting. Keep the discussion clear, open and confidential.
- It is appropriate for a pastor to be accompanied by an advocate in salary discussions.
- Salary discussions are not related to the decision about continuing a call, nor should they be tied into the evaluative process in any way.
- Remember that the family of the pastor is deeply affected by both the process and outcome of salary negotiations and often feels vulnerable during these times as well as when the salary is publicly reported or discussed.

Please note that all of this information is available at www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/660.

If you need additional information or clarification about the salary guidelines, please call your area church minister or contact Kirsten Schroeder, Director, Human Resources at MC Canada.

Kirsten Schroeder

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kirsten Schroeder".

Director, Human Resources

Karen Martens Zimmerly

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Karen Martens Zimmerly".

Denominational Minister



600 Shaftesbury Blvd
Winnipeg MB R3P 0M4
T: 204-888-6781
F: 204-831-5675
E: office@mennonitechurch.ca
W: www.mennonitechurch.ca

July/August Equipping #108

2011 PASTOR'S SALARY GUIDELINES

(Effective January 1, 2011)

As a result of a recent comprehensive review, please note that the bold, italicized text indicates significant changes or additions to the previous year's text. Dollar values have been updated but are not italicized.

1. SALARY UNITS

The pastor's salary and all increments, with the exception of the local cost of living portion (#3 below), are calculated in multiples of a basic unit which has been set for the year at \$371.86. (See NOTE #1 below). A salary calculation form with this year's units is available.

2. BASE SALARY

The base salary for all pastoral positions is set at 65 units (\$24,171). (See NOTE #2)

3. LOCAL COST OF LIVING

The local cost of living portion of the salary reflects the differences in the cost of living in various parts of Canada, or even within a given city. Various factors influence the calculation of this amount. The most significant of these is the cost of housing, where there may be a large discrepancy between rural and urban areas. (See NOTE #3) However, this part of the salary should also take into consideration other living expenses, such as the cost of heat, electricity or groceries, which may be similar or even higher in rural areas. Pastors should not be penalized for accepting a call to serve in a setting at either end of the spectrum. Congregations will use this flexible component to ensure a reasonable salary for the pastor(s).

The local cost of living calculation adjusts a pastor's salary to reflect the cost of living in the place to which he or she is called. It is not a housing allowance. ***Therefore, in the case of two people sharing one full-time position (for example, spouses sharing a pastorate), the full time salary for each person, including the local cost of living, should be calculated. Each total salary would then be prorated by their full-time equivalent service (i.e., if each works half-time, each salary would be multiplied by .5 FTE or full-time equivalent to arrive at the final salary).***

4. EXPERIENCE INCREMENTS

Experience increments are calculated according to the following formula:

| | |
|----------------------|------------------------------------|
| Years 1 through 6: | 4 units per year (\$1487 per year) |
| Years 7 through 12: | 3 units per year (\$1116 per year) |
| Years 13 through 18: | 1 unit per year (\$372 per year) |

2011 PASTOR'S SALARY GUIDELINES

Pastors who move from one congregation to another carry all of their experience increments with them to the new congregation. Pastors who come to an MC Canada congregation from another denomination would normally also carry all of their experience increments with them. Relevant experience in other kinds of work, ministry or service may be calculated on a prorated basis. (See NOTE #4). ***Previous experience is also prorated for years when there is less than full time experience. For example, if a pastor has worked for several years on a half-time basis, the full-time number of units would be multiplied by .5 to arrive at the final number of applicable increments.***

5. EDUCATIONAL INCREMENTS (See NOTE #5)

Educational increments should be paid according to the following formula:

Three units (\$1116) for suitable undergraduate work

An additional 4 units (\$1487) for a suitable post-bachelor's degree (MTS (applied), MA in church ministries)

An additional 6 units (\$2231) for suitable graduate work (MDiv)

An additional 3 units (\$1116) for a suitable doctoral degree (DMin)

Graduate degrees that are not directly oriented to preparing pastors for ministry (i.e., Peace Studies, Missions, Education, Psychology, Social Work) may also be considered for some credit. Units should be awarded based on the number of years expected by the institution for degree completion (not the number of years a person is enrolled in the program). Thus, based on the principle of awarding one unit to each year of completed education, an MA would be awarded 2 units. The unit credit for S/CPE (Supervised/Clinical Pastoral Education) is for four full units of credit, not for the single but year-long extended unit of S/CPE.

Graduate degrees other than seminary (i.e., ***Business, Engineering, English***), which while valuable for general preparation are not designed for pastoral ministry preparation, would normally be granted one unit per degree. The maximum units for all accumulated education are twelve.

6. RESPONSIBILITY INCREMENTS

Responsibility increments are paid only to the senior pastor, and may be calculated according to one of the following two formulas:

- a) Three units (\$1116) for each full-time ministry staff person whom the pastor supervises. The number of units paid would be prorated for part-time ministry staff. The oversight of lay ministers or youth workers should also be given consideration when calculating responsibility increments: or
- b) Three units (\$1116) for congregations of approximately 300 or more attendees and 5 units (\$1859) for congregations of approximately 600 or more attendees.

Some pastors may be assigned major additional responsibilities, such as serving as chaplain at a nursing home or hospital or a similar assignment. The congregation may decide these additional responsibilities should be acknowledged in the salary with up to 3 responsibility units (\$1116).

7. PRORATING SALARIES FOR PART-TIME PASTORS

To arrive at a salary for a less than full-time pastor, calculate the starting salary using the above five components (base, local cost of living, experience, education and responsibility increments) for a full-time position. Then prorate the total salary by the full-time equivalent (FTE) of the current position (i.e., multiply total salary by .5 for a half-time appointment). Note that vacation time is not

"For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. 3:11

2011 PASTOR'S SALARY GUIDELINES

prorated using this method, as the salary received during vacation leave is already prorated.

8. BENEFITS

It is assumed that all pastors will participate in the MC Canada pension plan, group RRSP or an equivalent plan (details are available from the MC Canada Payroll & Benefits Coordinator). All churches are encouraged to include Life and Long Term Disability Insurance, which is available through MC Canada's Group Insurance Plan, in the benefit package. They should also seriously consider supplying all pastoral staff with Extended Health and Dental benefits on a cost shared basis (through an area church plan or the Mennonite Benefit Association, where these are available, or with Blue Cross, for example). Area Church Ministers will have information regarding plans available in your area.

9. HONORARIA and FEES

Honoraria and fees should be offered to a pastor when he or she is requested to provide a service over and above his or her regular position duties. Before an engagement is accepted, the person or group requesting service should indicate to the pastor what the honorarium will be. An honorarium of \$100-200 for a preaching assignment (i.e. wedding, funeral, pulpit supply, etc.) and a fee of \$150 to \$250 per session for workshops, seminars, etc. plus mileage (whenever a total distance of more than 100 kilometres is traveled to participate in the event) is appropriate. An honorarium may be waived in the case of a pulpit or congregational exchange. (See NOTE #6)

10. EXPENSES

Expenses are costs incurred in doing the work of the church. The pastor should not pay these costs.

a) Car and Travel Expenses: This expense, when incurred in the line of duty, should be reimbursed. An allowance is not acceptable to the Canada Revenue Agency unless it is added to the pastor's T4 or the amount is proven to be reasonable by an accurate trip log. Any reimbursement in excess of the log must be added to taxable income. Reimbursement for travel between home and the church is taxable. (Canada Revenue Agency defines the reasonable rate for 2010 as \$0.52 for the first 5,000 km and \$0.46 for each additional km.) If an interim pastor is being hired and required to commute from another community, consideration should be given to increasing the salary to offset these costs. This additional salary would be subject to all applicable deductions and benefits.

b) Workshops, Courses, etc.: Arrangements should be made to enable the pastor to attend refresher courses, workshops, seminars and other occasions regularly for the revitalization of his/her ministry. The congregation may designate in advance an amount that it will pay. Many congregations budget up to \$500 per year for this non-taxable reimbursement. *Consideration may also be given to budgeting for Spiritual Direction for the pastor.*

c) Books and Periodicals: Reading material is an occupational expense. Many congregations budget up to \$500 per year for each pastor for books and periodicals. This is a taxable benefit if the books/periodicals are the property of the pastor. Some churches purchase books for the pastor and then allow him/her to buy at used book prices those books that the pastor wants to keep when he/she moves.

d) Office: The congregation will provide a furnished office and supplies, as well as secretarial support as required. In most instances this will include a computer, printer and internet access.

e) Conference Attendance Expenses: When the pastor is expected to attend Mennonite Church Canada and area church sessions on behalf of the congregation the expenses related to travel, lodging, meals and registration are paid by the congregation. Consideration should also be given to costs of

2011 PASTOR'S SALARY GUIDELINES

the pastor's spouse attending.

f) Other Expenses: If hosting of guests is an expectation of the pastor or if the spouse of the pastor is expected to attend church functions such as weddings and funerals, and there are related expenses (such as child care or loss of work time) then those expenses should be paid by the congregation. An appropriate amount should be budgeted for such depending upon the family situation and congregational expectations.

11. STATUTORY BENEFITS - Employer Costs

There are some expenses that are mandated by the government to employers. These fees are determined by the government and are not negotiable. The figures are determined by charts provided by the appropriate government agency and are usually based upon the basic compensation figure.

12. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

a) Clergy Residence Deduction: See Note #7.

b) Vacations: All pastors should receive at least three weeks of vacation per year plus time off for all statutory holidays. After five years or more of experience (this includes pastoral experience earned in previous positions) the pastor should receive four weeks of vacation per year plus time off for all statutory holidays. (Note. Part-time employees accrue annual leave hours at an amount proportionate to their monthly FTE. For example, if a pastor is working at .80 FTE, they should get either the three or four weeks off at their regular salary, which is 80% of the full-time salary). As a contribution to the church beyond the local setting, congregations are encouraged to release their pastors for short assignments such as serving on Area Church or MC Canada boards/councils, or as camp chaplains, etc. This should not be counted as holiday time.

c) Parental/Pregnancy Leaves: These leaves are mandated by the government and government guidelines should be consulted when the situation arises.

d) Sick Leave Policy. *Congregations are urged to establish a sick leave policy. Examples of policy guidelines and a Supplemental Unemployment Benefit (SUB) plan can be found in the resource section of the Mennonite Church Canada website. The church policy should include how time is accumulated, reporting of illness, requirements for Dr.'s notes, and disbursement of unused sick leave upon termination (normally this is not paid out). We suggest a policy which permits 1½ days per month sick leave prorated to the FTE status of the pastor, with an accumulation of up to 75 working days, (refer to Employment Canada [EI] benefit guidelines for details), at which time long-term disability takes effect.*

This can be done in one of two ways:

- i. The congregation can pay the full salary during this time of illness. If the congregation has a policy to cover salary during illness, it may be eligible for reduced EI premiums.
- ii. The second way to cover the cost of this period of illness is for the employee to apply to EI for unemployment benefits (normally 55% of his/her insured earnings). The congregation would top up the level allowed by the EI Commission (up to 95% of regular salary for unemployment as a result of sickness). If the congregation selects this option, the employer must register the plan (called a SUB plan) in advance with the EI Commission, and treat all employees according to this plan. This method makes the congregation ineligible for reduced EI premiums.

2011 PASTOR'S SALARY GUIDELINES

e) **Sabbatical Study Leaves:** Congregations are *strongly* encouraged to provide longer leaves for study, service or renewal (sabbaticals) for their pastor(s) from time to time. (Check with your Area Church Minister or go to <http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/programs/leadership/leaves/faq.htm> on the MC Canada website for details.) Pastors may be eligible for forgivable loans from the Company of 1000 Study Reserve Fund for sabbatical study. Information and application forms are available from the MC Canada Denominational Minister's office.

f) **Candidating and Moving Costs:** Congregations are responsible to pay travel and lodging costs for both pastor and spouse to candidate for a position. Moving arrangements and expenses when a pastor is called to a new congregation need to be negotiated. As a minimum the calling congregation should pay the cost of a rental truck and driving costs and should offer to assist in loading/unloading. Consideration may be given to paying the costs for the pastor and spouse to make one house-hunting trip to the new community.

g) **Memo of Understanding:** It is important to agree on a clear Memo of Understanding with the pastor at the beginning of each term *and to review it annually for salary updates*. A sample is provided in the accompanying package, in the Pastor-Congregation Relations Packet or is available upon request from the MC Canada Denominational Minister.

NOTES

1. This formula simplifies the application of the annual cost of living increase, which is based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The basic salary unit is increased each year by a percentage equal to the increase in the CPI. This adjustment is calculated prior to the annual mailing of these guidelines. The April to April CPI is the standard that has been used for these guidelines. The April 2009 to April 2010 CPI used here was 1.8% (the most recent CPI figure may be found at <http://www.statcan.ca/english/Subjects/Cpi/cpi-en.htm>). If you use a later figure (Mennonite Church Canada uses the July to July figure for its staff) be sure to use the same 12-month period each year. It is important to be consistent in this regard. Although the April to April figure (or an alternative that you may choose) may seem unduly high or low in any given year, these fluctuations will average out over time if you use a consistent period. Note that using a figure other than the April to April one will mean recalculating the numbers above and applying a slightly different salary scale from that used by most other congregations. All figures calculated in the above guidelines have been rounded off to the nearest dollar.

2. The total (65 units) was arrived at by a comparison with several other denominations in Canada and their pastoral salary guidelines. The base places our salaries within the range found in these denominations. It applies to all persons involved in pastoral ministry. Congregations which hire a youth worker or other program staff without pastoral responsibilities (e.g. not including preaching, pastoral counseling, etc. – clarification is available from the MC Canada Denominational Minister) may begin with a lower base, perhaps 50 units.

3. The pastor is free to choose his/her housing. However, the best estimate of the calculation of the Local Cost of Living portion of the salary should be based on consideration of the fair rental value of a standard three-bedroom home in a community/neighborhood that represents the average for the congregation. The information should be obtained from a local realtor (*for example, in the last quarter of 2009 the annual average rental cost for Winnipeg was \$15,600*).

Alternately, salary comparisons for your location and Winnipeg may be obtained by calling the human resources director at 204-888-6781 or 1-866-888-6781. Please phone with your total salary calculation (excluding benefit costs) for a cost comparison.

2011 PASTOR'S SALARY GUIDELINES

This is not the same as the determination of the Clergy Residence Deduction (Item #11(a) above), which is the income tax deduction allowed based on the pastor's actual housing cost, including utilities. (See NOTE #7 below)

4. Pastors are compensated for their experience along an assumed learning curve – i.e. the number of units paid would be greater in the earlier years of ministry and grow smaller in the later years of ministry. In order to discourage financial prejudice by congregations against experienced and therefore more “expensive” pastors, these guidelines propose that experience increments be capped after 18 years.
5. Educational increments are calculated in a way that honors a pastor's undergraduate and graduate studies. The MDiv degree is considered the basic preparatory degree for ministry. However, other educational disciplines offer valuable tools for ministry and need to be recognized and considered when calculating the educational increment (i.e. Bible College studies, BEd, BSc, MA, MTS, MEd, etc.). For some degrees or studies in process, partial credit rather than full credit would be appropriate.
6. Pastors should be allowed to keep any honoraria which they receive. Honoraria are gifts of appreciation given to the pastor for his/her work and should be seen as a love gift to the pastor, not the church. Pastors are reminded that all portions of honoraria which are above and beyond incurred expenses are viewed by the Canada Revenue Agency as taxable income and must be reported on their income tax return.
7. The federal government requires employers to verify in writing that any employee claiming this deduction is eligible to do so. It is imperative, therefore, that congregations ensure adherence to the conditions of the latest CRA bulletin regarding the Clergy Residence Deduction. Links to the CRA bulletin and the Clergy Residence Deduction form may be found at <http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/resourcecentre/ResourceView/5/7765>.

MEMO OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN A CONGREGATION AND ITS PASTOR
based on the annual Mennonite Church Canada Pastors' Salary Guidelines

[All or some or adaptations of the items listed below will make up the Memo of Understanding.]

Date _____, 20_____

A covenant between _____
name of pastor

and _____
name of congregation

1. Position and Term. This position carries the title of _____
of the _____ and is a _____ time position. The
name of congregation full or other
term for this position is _____ years, the current term beginning _____ and
ending _____. Each term will be reviewed by the _____

governing body

or its designated representatives at least six months prior to the ending date, and is subject to renewal by _____ percent vote for approval of the congregation (at least ninety days
2/3 minimum recommended¹
before the ending date),

OR An open-ended term will be reviewed annually by the _____
governing body

or its designated representatives. A vote by the congregation to review an open-ended term can be taken only after a resolution to that effect has been approved by a simple majority of the votes cast. The subsequent vote on the pastor's continuing employment must receive _____ percent of the vote cast for approval.
2/3 minimum recommended¹

2. Covenant Duration. This memo of understanding is effective for one year of the above term, beginning _____, 20____ and ending _____, 20_____.

3. Salary. The congregation provides the pastor with a cash salary of \$_____, based on the Mennonite Church Canada Pastors' Salary Guidelines. The above salary includes a local cost of living portion of \$_____; \$_____ based on _____ years of experience; \$_____, based on education attained; and \$_____ based on other considerations: e.g. _____ (if applicable).

4. MC Canada Pension Plan. The congregation agrees to participate with the pastor in the MC Canada Pension Plan. The pastor will contribute 5% (or 4%) of total salary (base & increments) by payroll deduction and this will be matched by the congregation.

5. MC Canada Group Insurance Plan. The congregation will pay the Life Insurance and Basic Accident Insurance premium. The pastor will pay the Long-Term Disability (LTD) premium by payroll deduction. (or The congregation will pay the Life Insurance and Basic

¹ Check your church's bylaws or consult with your area church leader about appropriate percentage levels.

Accident Insurance premium. The pastor will pay the LTD premium by payroll deduction and the congregation will increase the pastor's salary to offset the cost of this deduction).

6. **Health Care Coverage.** The congregation agrees to pay the pastor the equivalent of the health or hospitalization premium (in those provinces where provincial health care is covered by a premium.)
7. **Utilities.** In the case of a parsonage, the congregation will pay \$_____ towards the utilities, or they will pay the whole utilities expense. This amount will be taxable to the pastor. The congregation will keep the parsonage in good repair, paying for such items as improvements, redecorating and repairs.
8. **Car and travel expenses.** The congregation agrees to reimburse the pastor ____¢ per kilometre for local work-related travel upon submission of detailed logs. Trips to and from the congregation will not be reimbursed. In addition, the pastor will be reimbursed for travel to area church annual gatherings and the MC Canada delegate Assembly, as well as to ministers' conferences within the area church.
9. **Office Expenses.** The congregation will provide adequate office equipment and furniture, and pay for expenses of operating the church office, such as stationery, postage, telephone, duplicating and other supplies. Secretarial help will be arranged for as needed.
10. **Vacation and Illness.** The pastor will be given _____ weeks of vacation annually, and ____ days off per week. Or the congregation may follow a "working units" approach. A "unit" refers to either a morning, an afternoon or an evening. Where this method is used, expecting between 12 and 14 units per week is the norm. This would need to be negotiated. The congregation will arrange pulpit supply for _____ Sundays per year. This should include the pastor's vacation, illness, or attending area and national church functions or special courses. Alternatively, the pastor will preach _____ Sundays per month. One weekend off per quarter might be considered as a way to support health in the pastoral family. The pastor may accumulate "sick days" at the rate of 1.5 per month to a maximum of 75 working days. Longer leaves will be based on Disability Benefits. Parental or maternity leaves are in accordance with government guidelines.
11. **Professional Growth.** The congregation will provide \$_____ annually for the pastor to apply toward subscriptions to theological journals and magazines, and the purchase of books for the study. As these will remain the property of the congregation, this amount will not be taxable to the pastor. (Or, as these will be the property of the pastor, this amount will be taxable.) Part of this amount may be used toward refresher courses and seminars (non-taxable). This amount will be cumulative if it is not all used in a given year.
12. **Continuing Education.** The congregation supports various types of continuing education which will encourage the professional growth of the pastor. Up to _____ working days and \$_____ will be provided annually for such activities. These may be accumulated over three years to permit attendance at events such as seminary interterm or summer school.
13. **Sabbatical Study Leave.** In order to encourage significant growth in ministry and to increase the likelihood of longer pastoral tenure, the congregation agrees to establish the following sabbatical policy. The pastor will be given ____ months of sabbatical time for renewal, study,

or service after ___ years of service.¹ During the sabbatical, the pastor will receive _____% salary and benefits as exist in the then current covenant of understanding. Sabbatical plans submitted by the pastor must be approved by _____ at least
governing body
three months prior to the sabbatical. Following a sabbatical, the pastor agrees to provide a minimum of one year of service to the congregation, with the understanding that repayment of sabbatical salary and benefits will be made for failure to do so.

14. Service Beyond the Congregation. The congregation affirms the pastor's participation in programs of the local community and the larger Mennonite Church. Such involvements will be tested with the church leadership for guidance.

15. Review. This Memo of Understanding will be reviewed annually by the Church Council, Finance or Personnel Committee with the pastor, in time for the preparation of the annual budget of the congregation.

Signatures:

Pastor

Date

Chairperson of Congregational Board

Date

¹ Practice varies across Canada. Some policies offer 4 months after 4 years of service, others offer 4 months after 6 years of service.



600 Shaftesbury Blvd
 Winnipeg MB R3P 0M4
 T: 204-888-6781
 F: 204-831-5675
 E: office@mennonitechurch.ca
 W: www.mennonitechurch.ca

July/August Equipping #108

MC CANADA PASTORS' ANNUAL SALARY WORKSHEET, 2011

Congregation: _____

Pastor: _____

1. Basic Compensation

- a) *Base Salary:* 65 units @ \$371.86 each = \$24,171
 - b) *Local Cost of Living:* = \$ _____
 - c) *Experience Increments:* _____ Units @ \$371.86 each = \$ _____
 - d) *Educational Increments:* _____ Units @ \$371.86 each = \$ _____
 - e) *Responsibility Increments:* _____ Units @ \$371.86 each = \$ _____
- Total Basic Compensation:** \$ _____

2. Benefits: MC Canada Benefit Plans (estimates, subject to Plan requirements)

- a) Pension Plan: (congregation pays 4% ____ or 5% ____ of salary) = \$ _____
 - b) Long-term Disability: (congregation pays ____ %) = \$ _____
 - c) Life Insurance: (employee pays 100 %) = \$ _____ 0 _____
 - d) Other: [e.g. Extended Health & Dental Benefits] (congregation pays ____ %) = \$ _____
- Total Benefits:** \$ _____

3. Expenses:

- a) Car and travel expenses (@ ____ ¢ per kilometre) = \$ _____
 - b) Workshops, courses, etc. = \$ _____
 - c) Books and periodicals = \$ _____
 - d) Conference attendance = \$ _____
 - e) Other expenses = \$ _____
- Total Expenses:** \$ _____

4. Statutory Benefits: Employer Costs (estimates, subject to government mandates)

- a) Health Tax (as mandated by provincial plan) = \$ _____
 - b) Canada/Quebec Pension Plan = \$ _____
 - c) Employment Insurance = \$ _____
- Total Statutory Benefits:** \$ _____

5. Total Salary and Benefits: Cost to Congregation \$ _____

6. Vacation Allowance: _____ weeks vacation, plus _____ statutory holidays

7. Study/Service Leave Provisions:

Signatures (indicate agreement with figures in items 1, 3, 6, 7, and the principles of items 2 and 4):

Pastor _____ Date: _____

Congregational Officer _____ Date: _____



Dave Bergen
Executive Secretary
MC Canada Formation

Sticking Together

July & August 2010, *Equipping* #108

“It is said that those who walk on flat ground need not hold hands. But we who climb a steep and slippery road must hold onto each other to make our way securely.”

These words, credited to St Francis de Sales, gentle 16th century spiritual writer and church leader of Geneva, Switzerland, are a provocative reminder that Christians need to stick together in our journey Godward. The church in every time is called to negotiate the steep terrain of issues that challenge us to define and redefine our faith. In order to fulfill this calling faithfully, it is imperative that we do so as one body whose gifts, abilities, strengths and weaknesses are united in common spirit and purpose, and enlivened by the Holy Spirit. Thus we embody the presence of God in our world.

This is the spirit that guides the work that is anticipated at Assembly 2010 in Calgary, where we will reason and reflect together on what it means to be “a faithful church in the midst of hermeneutical ferment,” responding to the hard challenges that define our time. By holding on tightly to one another’s hands we will express and build trust. Where the strength and wisdom of a few is insufficient, the combined strength and wisdom of many, linked together in common purpose, will be ample to navigate the perils and potentials of the road. The bonds of trust, love, friendship and forbearance that make us one will enable us, together, to go where the Spirit calls. This is my prayer and my conviction.

Recent Christian Formation developments:

1. In June, the Resource Centre launched a new “Anabaptist Resource Consortium” in partnership with Columbia Bible College Library, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada Library, and Mennonite & Brethren in Christ Resource Centre. Integrated online searches between the four partners are now possible and borrowing is easier than ever. Along with these expanded resource options, users also have enhanced search and sort options that will help more easily locate exactly the resource you need in your setting. Be sure to check it out at www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1369.
2. Christian Formation is committed to making certain core Anabaptist faith-building resources available to our churches in their first language. Recently we celebrated the completion of two new translations of the introductory Mennonite brochure: *What Makes a Mennonite?* into the Korean and Chin languages, bringing the list of languages in which this resource is now available to six. See them all at www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1370.
3. Concern for meaningful participation of young adults in church life is a common theme heard in many congregations. The article, “Setting the Welcome Thermostat” (attached) suggests that churches that want to be attractive to young adults should consider how they might be: flexible while honouring the importance of commitment, welcoming but not desperate-sounding, and overt about theology while making room for doubt. Perhaps this article will be a help in your discussion of meaningful ministry with young adults.

July & August 2010, *Equipping* #108

Setting the Welcome Thermostat

by Sarah B. Drummond

On the cubicle where she works all day, Abby pinned a picture of a church. Where many would keep a photo of family members or beloved pets, Abby has an image of a brownstone building on the Cambridge Common, and she looks at it whenever she feels anxious or unmoored.

At 25, Abby has seen more life than the average young adult. She moved to Cambridge, Massachusetts from the West Coast when her high-school sweetheart husband had an opportunity to pursue a graduate degree there. Not long after they relocated, however, the marriage fell apart and left Abby in a city with no stable job, no friends, and no family. What she did have, though, was First Church in Cambridge (FCC), a church she had first found with her husband and that had later helped her through the transition to singlehood. She now views the church as her anchor, and as she considers options for graduate school herself she is seriously considering staying in Cambridge so she does not have to leave the church behind.

FCC is, in many ways, a typical mainline congregation. The music is usually classical, the liturgy rooted in Christian history and decidedly traditional. Boards and committees make many of the church's decisions through a conventional governance structure. The ministry staff includes a senior pastor, an interim associate pastor, and a lay minister of religious education. The community where the church is located is highly-educated and liberal, and the church's stance on social issues reflects this environment. What makes the church truly different from many of its peers is not just that it is growing—many churches do that—but the demographic category that is growing most quickly: Post-collegiate adults in their 20s and 30s. At one New Member Sunday in early 2008, out of 30 new members, 27 were under the age of 35.

What is their secret?

There is no easy answer to that question. But many religious leaders would like to have at least an inkling as to how this mainline Protestant church has been able to attract a critical mass of new members from such a fluid and complex population.

In 2007-2008, FCC designed and implemented a church-wide program on Christian "faith practices" for all of its members, offering them the opportunity to explore the ways in which

they were living out their faith through Christian practices such as hospitality, keeping Sabbath, and testimony. Building on this study, in 2008-2009 they initiated a second faith practices program focusing specifically on younger adults. They deployed seminarians toward the purpose of reaching out to the younger adults who had found their way, through various means, to the church. The seminarians each designed a program, implemented the plan, and then reported back to each other and church leaders about what they did and what they learned.

Here's a summary of some of the issues that emerged through interviews with the program leaders and several of the participants. These tensions, surfaced by the interviews, give helpful food for thought to congregations that seek to engage younger adults.

Tension #1: Flexible, But With High Expectations

One of the basic questions one must ask when considering the faith lives of younger adults is who, exactly, is in this demographic category? In this case it was younger adults who had finished college but not necessarily put down roots. They saw their lives as transitory, not just because they had moved a lot (although they had), but because they had not yet made long-term commitments to a neighborhood, vocation, or in many cases a life partner. They all described the population into which they fall as one that is in flux and not yet peacefully ensconced in a way of life. They spoke of a sense of yearning for meaning and community that they thought they could find in a church. They described having arrived at what one might call a younger adult plateau, where "you've done all your 'firsts' and you feel a little settled and willing to grow."

They also spoke of a sense of busyness that made conventional church participation difficult for them. The seminarian who created a program on parenting for younger adult parents bemoaned the fact that many potential participants simply could not make the time to participate. "It seemed to me that people were sincere in their desire, and yet the hurdles were also very real." All involved agreed that some form of a "ladder" approach to program planning had been essential, where there were different levels of involvement from which participants could choose. Ultimately, program leaders concurred that they had to, as one put it, "be intentional about offering diverse ways of plugging in."

Tension #2: Welcoming, But Not Desperate

All interview participants and program leaders at some point spoke about the hospitality they found at FCC. They described having needed, in a tumultuous or tenuous time in life, to have a place where they felt they belonged and where the community was glad they were there. Yet the nature of the welcome they received had a particular flavor to it that many found essential to their comfort in the church: The welcome did not feel needy.

Many program participants reported that one of the things that drew them to FCC was the presence of others in their age group. Some pointed out the chicken/egg irony, where a church needs to have younger members to attract younger members. Even so, FCC seems to have set the hospitality thermostat to just the right temperature to help a younger adult feel welcome without feeling pressure. By appearing joyful themselves and also happy to welcome newcomers, FCC members caused younger adults to feel embraced out of a sense of abundance, rather than scarcity.

Tension #3: Believing, But Not Dogmatic

Many participants in this study described a sense of comfort they derived at FCC from knowing where the church was coming from theologically. Though one might conjecture that younger adults, often fresh out of secular colleges, would feel most at home in a setting where the Christian message was watered down, the younger adults interviewed appreciated that the church knows who and whose it is.

This comfort seemed to have many layers to it. First, they appreciated the church's honesty about its Christian worldview and would not have cottoned to a cloaked message. Second, they commented on the integrity of the church's purported vision and how it was reflected in the way church members behaved toward them. Tying back to the example of the welcome they received, several indicated that the church's intentional vision—which was generated out of a great deal of work on the part of the church's leaders and members—is a way of hospitality. The younger adults interviewed understood that the welcome they received was part of the church's effort to live out its stated vision. This

congruence between what the church did and what it said was highly attractive to what one participant called "cynical Gen-X types."

They also, however, appreciated the way in which the church welcomed their doubts and questions. One described her decision to join FCC this way, "I got sucked in by a sermon." She went on to describe a sermon that questioned whether a just God would have crushed Pharaoh's army in the Red Sea. She had never heard a minister openly question the Bible, and she found this freeing. Her comments reflected what those who study faith development might consider common knowledge: younger adults redefine the faiths of their childhoods as they formulate their adult belief systems.

Perhaps because of the relatively highly-educated population from which FCC draws, this permission to question seemed particularly important. Participants indicated that they could not have felt comfortable in a church that required them to withhold questions and forego critical thinking.

What does it take for a church to be attractive to a younger adult? By no means an exhaustive answer, the initiative at FCC brings to light that churches should consider how they might be

- 1 flexible while honouring the importance of commitment,
- 2 welcoming but not desperate-sounding, and
- 3 overt about theology while making room for doubt.

Clearly, these tensions present more questions than they do answers. But as many churches are led to believe that following fads is the only way to reach younger adults, these tensions present opportunities for a more nuanced conversation. Younger adults are savvy when someone is trying to sign them up for something, draw them into something, or sell them something. May they also be savvy to how much they have to gain, and how much is at stake for them, as they seek to join with a community to find meaning in their lives.

Adapted from "Church for the Under-Forty Crowd" in the forthcoming issue of *Congregations*—Spring 2010 (vol. 36, no. 2), copyright © 2010 by the Alban Institute. All rights reserved.

Reprinted by permission, Alban Weekly. Copyright © 2009, the Alban Institute. All rights reserved.

RESOURCE UPDATE

BORROW ... PURCHASE ... DOWNLOAD ... LINK

600 Shaftesbury Blvd. Winnipeg MB R3P 0M4; 1-866-888-6785 (toll free); resources@mennonitechurch.ca; www.mennonitechurch.ca/resourcecentre

WORSHIP RESOURCES

Summer:

Assembly Sunday
www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1307

Camp Sunday
www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/267

Summer worship
www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/259

Fall:

Sept 12 – Sunday School Promotion
www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1328

Sept 19 – International Day of Peace
www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1059

Oct 3 – World Communion Sunday
www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1356

Oct 31 – Mennonite Heritage Sunday
www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1357

Nov 7 – Peace Sunday
www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1358

Nov 14 – Mission Sunday
www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1339

Nov 28 – First Advent
www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/343


We're changing the Update.


Fewer Hyperlinks are included in this PDF version. Rather, to view all the resources highlighted in this month's Update, check one online location


www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1373

We trust that website viewing will be easier for you!

MAKE THE MOST OF THIS UPDATE:

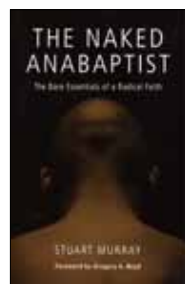
 **Circulate** widely – to librarian, pastor, worship planners, education coordinator, and church secretary

 **Invite** friends/committee members to subscribe:
www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/347

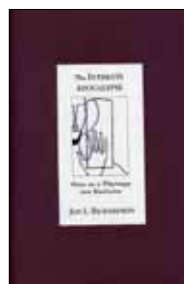
 **Submit** your own original worship service or congregational event for inclusion here and on the web

2010 SUMMER READING IDEAS

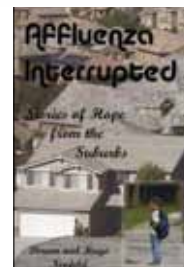
Here's a short list of new poetry, biography, and fiction titles at the Resource Centre.



The Naked Anabaptist: The Bare Essentials of a Radical Faith



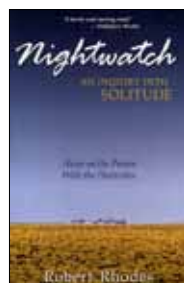
The Intimate Apocalypse



Affluenza Interrupted: Stories of Hope from the Suburbs



Follow Me to Freedom: Leading and Following as an Ordinary Radical



Nightwatch: An Inquiry into Solitude



Saving the Seasons: How to Can, Freeze, or Dry Almost Anything



VIEW THE ENTIRE LIST ONLINE

www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1373

the **48**hr contest

Refer to page 4

Children's Corner

Resources for the library, home, Sunday School or Sunday morning storyteller



The Secret of Saying Thanks

by Douglas Wood and Greg Shed, Simon & Schuster, 2005.

If you've not yet discovered the secret of saying thanks, it's waiting for you. The secret can be found in the sunrise that offers promises for the day ahead, or in the gentle shade of a tree sheltering you from the hot rays of the sun, or on the rock that offers rest from a long walk. This book tenderly portrays all of the many ways in which we can say thanks for the wonders we sometimes take for granted in life.

Website Window

Links worth noting

**Our catalogue links you to many websites
– here are some recent additions:**



www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=26
– Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada



www.congregationalresources.org/ – online resources from Alban Institute.



www.ekklesia.co.uk/content/cpt/article_060823wink.shtml – “Facing the Myth of Redemptive Violence” essay



www.christatthecheckpoint.com/lectures.html
– Christ at the Checkpoint (Bethlehem Bible College CD)



www.ambs.edu/news-and-publications/iTunesU
– AMBS chapels, forums, public presentations

✉ Do you have any sites to recommend?

From our Churches

Original materials from our constituency

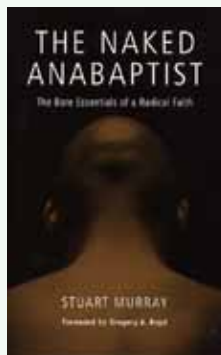
Church Library Policies and Procedures

A sample of library policies and procedures from Waterloo North Mennonite Church (including mission statement and policies re collection development, circulation and processing).

✉ Share your church's original material at resources@mennonitechurch.ca

Check www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/480 for a complete listing

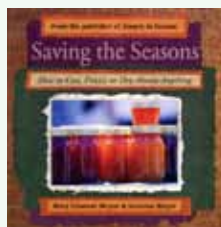
From our Press



The Naked Anabaptist: The Bare Essentials of a Radical Faith

by Stuart Murray, Herald Press, 2010.

Anabaptist Christians have been around for almost 500 years. But what does Anabaptism look like when not clothed in Mennonite or Amish traditions? Writing from Great Britain, Stuart Murray peels back the layers to reveal the core components of Anabaptism—and what they mean for faith in his context and ours. It's a way of following Jesus that challenges, disturbs, and inspires us, summoning us to wholehearted discipleship and worship. Read this book, and catch a vision for living a life of radical faith!



Saving the Seasons: How to Can, Freeze, or Dry Almost Anything

by Mary Clemens Meyer, Susanna Meyer, Herald Press, 2010.

You can't get much closer to the source of your food than canning or preserving it yourself, and Saving the Seasons shows you how through clear instructions and step-by-step pictures. Loaded with helpful tips, charts and user-friendly recipes for beginners and experts alike, you will enjoy the season's bounty all year long! A follow-up to the popular Simply in Season cookbook.



From MC Canada



Being a Faithful Church 2: 'Peace Church' as 'Pacifist Church' by Jack Suderman (for 2010 Assembly). A model for how to apply the principles of discernment outlined in the 2009 document, Being a Faithful Church: Testing the spirits in the Midst of Hermeneutical Ferment.

What Makes a Mennonite brochure – translated into Chin and Korean

An 8-panel brochure – now in 6 languages – that is ideal for people new to the Mennonite Church or visiting a Mennonite congregation for the first time.



Anabaptist Resource Consortium. We're placing more Mennonite materials at your fingertips! We've joined this new integrated online library service. You're now able to browse our online catalogue and receive search results from Winnipeg and our 3 partner libraries: Mennonite Church Eastern Canada Library, Columbia Bible College Library, Mennonite & Brethren in Christ Resource Centre.

New Resources

We average 3 new resources daily.



The Marriage Course Kit

by Nicky Lee and Sila Lee, Alpha, 2009.

Invites us to linger with the ugly side of war, instead of hide from it. Muriel T. Stackley's words - simple, unflinching - and Robert Joy's art help us travel a chronological path to a circumspect place where we may embrace our outrage and begin to craft hope.



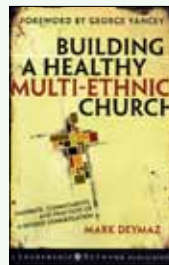
Also see their Marriage Preparation Course Kit, Alpha 2003 – a 5-session course that offers practical tools to help partners build the foundations for a lasting marriage.



A Field of Voices: Hymns for Worship

by James E. Clemens and David Wright, Table Round Press, 2007.

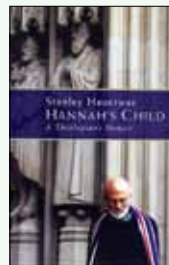
A Field of Voices grows from the friendship and artistic collaboration of composer Jim Clemens and poet David Wright. These 30 hymns - a cappella and accompanied, unison to four-part - range from meditation to prayer to confession to praise.



Building a Healthy Multi-Ethnic Church: Mandate, Commitments and Practices of a Diverse Congregation

by Mark Deymaz, Jossey-Bass, 2007.

Through personal stories, proven experience and a thorough analysis of the biblical text, this book illustrates both the biblical mandate for the multi-ethnic church as well as the seven core commitments required to bring it about.



Hannah's Child: A Theologian's Memoir

by Stanley Hauerwas, Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2010.

With genuine humility, Hauerwas describes his intellectual struggles with faith, how he has dealt with the complex reality of marriage to a mentally ill partner, and the gift of friendships that have influenced his character. Throughout the narrative shines Hauerwas's conviction that the tale of his life is worth telling only because of the greater Christian story providing foundation and direction for his own.



Jesus Brand Spirituality: He Wants His Religion Back

by Ken Wilson, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2008.

This book is for those disillusioned by the current swirl of cultural conflict, moralism, and religious meanness that amounts to a form of trademark infringement on the movement that bears his name. In contrast, the author explores four dimensions of the spirituality Jesus left in his wake--active, contemplative, biblical, and communal.

From our Partners



Canadian Mennonite University Bookstore

We've added another partner!

The number of resources we offer for sale from our website has now grown significantly. The CMU Bookstore has begun posting its retail items on our site. This is another step toward becoming a "one-stop" shop for Anabaptist and related materials (borrow, purchase, download, link).



Muffins for Granny: Stories from Survivors of the Canadian Residential School System DVD

Mongrel Media, 2007.

Mixing stark animated moments with human faces and home movie footage, Muffins For Granny is a raw and honest documentary about a difficult chapter in Canadian history – the residential school system – a chapter that, for some, is not over.

CMU Bookstore
600 Shaftesbury Blvd. • Winnipeg

We have a great selection of theology books from a variety of publishers and authors.



For special orders contact

cmubookstore@cmu.ca
Call 204.487.3300 | ext. 339
or toll-free 877.231.4570
www.cmu.ca



Oh God, Oh God, Oh God! Young Adults Speak Out about Sexuality and Christian Spirituality
ed., Heather Godsey and Lara Blackwood Pickrel, Chalice Press, 2010.

The essays in this book address multiple perspectives on love, dating, marriage, parenthood, sex, and sexuality, as well as looking at the history of the church's struggle with human sexuality from a fresh perspective.



The 24/7 Experience: A DVD Curriculum on Following Jesus Every Day,
Zondervan, 2006.

In an episodic, reality-TV style, watch seven youth cross the US to meet with some radical Jesus-followers. With seven episodes (20 minutes each) and discussion questions for small groups, you can help your youth learn about love, justice, unity, and spiritual gifts.



PeaceParts Toolkit
Mennonite Central Committee, 2010.

What's your part for peace? Learn more about MCC's work to build peace and justice, and reflect on how you can be part of building a more peaceful world. Includes a six-week study curriculum, children's activities, a DVD and more.



Mary Magdalene DVD
by Betsey Beckman, Vision Video, 2009.

Through liturgical dance and drama, this video offers an inspiring encounter with Mary Magdalene, whom we come to know as one of Jesus' most courageous and intimate disciples.



The Spirituality of Fund-Raising
by Henri J.M. Nouwen, Henri Nouwen Society, 2004.

"Fundraising is a subject we seldom think about from a spiritual perspective ... From the perspective of the gospel fund-raising is first and foremost a form of ministry. It is a way of announcing our vision and inviting other people into our mission ... It is as spiritual as giving a sermon, entering a time of prayer, visiting the sick, or feeding the hungry." – Henri Nouwen



Witnesses DVD
by Curt Cloninger, Vision Video.

Dramatic portrayals of 8 characters who reflect on their relationship with Jesus, including a "Bronx accented" Abe, who hilariously describes a party Jesus attended; an "Italian" Lazarus, who describes Jesus calling him from the grave; and Barabbas, who describes his reaction to Jesus' crucifixion. Through the eyes of these characters, both comic and serious, the audience is challenged to see Jesus from a fresh perspective.

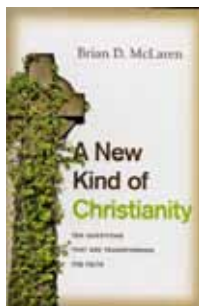


The Lord is my Shepherd: The Psalms CD
by Paul Dueck, Paulinda Productions, 2010.

All the Psalms are composed and performed by Paul Dueck on the Paraguayan and Celtic Harp.



Thank you for the wide response to our first contest last month – and congratulations to Susan Ens Funk from Saskatoon who won the copy of *This Hidden Thing*, a novel by Dora Dueck.



This month's prize
A New Kind of Christianity
by Brian McLaren.

This month's question
Name one favourite Mennonite Publishing Network title (Herald Press or Faith and Life Resources) – and why.

Email your response to:
resources@mennonitechurch.ca, with "July/Aug 2010 Contest" in subject line.

To be eligible:
Contestant must be an online subscriber, and a Canadian resident. Entries are due within 48 hours of receiving electronic notice of this update.

Worship Resources for

May 2010, *Equipping* #106

Assembly Sunday 2010

Reclaiming Jesus[™] Gladly Wear the Name (Colossians 3:15-17)

July 4, 2010

This worship resource has been developed by the worship team of this year's assembly to link to our Canada-wide church in worship on the assembly theme. The worship planning team is comprised of Doug Klassen, Pastor of Foothills Mennonite Church; Chad Miller, Associate Pastor at Foothills; Alissa Bender, Pastor at First Mennonite Church, Calgary; and Karen Martens Zimmerly, Denominational Minister for Mennonite Church Canada.

The children's feature was provided by Elsie Rempel, Director of Christian Nurture for Mennonite Church Canada. This resource can be used for worship on July 4th, or for reporting back to your congregation about this year's Assembly at a later date.

Introduction

From June 29-July 3, 2010 individuals from Mennonite congregations across Canada will gather to worship and work together as Mennonite Church Canada. The theme for this year, inspired by Colossians 3:15-17, is "Reclaiming Jesus[™]: Gladly Wear the Name". In accordance with a 2006 Assembly resolution about core scripture texts, Colossians 3:12-17 has provided us with spiritual guidance for the last two years. This year our primary focus is on the latter verses of this text. We hope and pray that worshipping with this text will create a space for the peace of Christ to grow in our hearts. We pray that we will be equipped and empowered to identify with Christ, and do everything out of gratitude, and in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

WE GATHER

Gathering Hymns

- STJ 3 Jesus calls us here to meet him
- STJ 9 Come, now is the time to worship
- HWB 25 Jesus, stand among us
The Mountain of God – Phil Campbell-Enns
www.mennochurch.mb.ca/resources/worship/philce/
- STJ 64 Somos el cuerpo de Cristo (We are the body of Christ)
- HWB 7 Here, O Lord, your servants gather

Call to worship

(Congregational responses appear in bold italics)

The peace of Christ be with you

And also with you

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.
Let it infuse your very being.

Let it have control over every action.
Let it be first in every thought and feeling.

Fear will not rule. Selfish ambition will not rule.
Bitterness will not rule.

The peace of Christ will rule in our hearts.

*ALL: To this peace we were called in the one body,
and we are thankful.*

The word of Christ be with you

And also with you.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. Let it wash over you in speech and song.

Let it inform your words and your actions. Let it shape your life and the lives of your communities. Words of hatred will not dwell here. Words of apathy will not dwell here.

Words of division will not dwell here. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.

*ALL: In this wisdom we will teach other,
with gratitude in our hearts.*

The name of Jesus be with you

And also with you.

Let the name of Jesus be claimed in your words and in your deeds.

Let it identify your allegiance. Let it guide your life. Let it enact your beliefs.

Let it be first in your hearts and in your lives.

*ALL: Whatever we do, may it bear the name of Jesus
Christ. Thanks be to God!*

Songs of Praise

- STS 31* Jesus, be the center
HWB 50 Praise the Lord, sing hallelujah
HWB 112 O Lord, our Lord, how majestic
HWB 285 All hail the power of Jesus' name
God of Wonders – Steve Hindalong & Marc Byrd, 2000
Brent-Benson Music Publishing Inc.
STS 1 Praise the One who breaks the darkness
HWB 115 Jesus, thou mighty Lord
Here I am to Worship – Tim Hughes, 2000
Thankyou Music
(Admin. by EMI Christian Music Publishing)

Prayer of Confession

Holy God,
We confess to showing a “cold shoulder”
or thinking of revenge more often
than responding with the peace of Christ.
We confess responding to your Word more often
as part of our weekly worship ritual
than out of daily hunger for its life-giving nourishment.
We confess that we busy ourselves interacting confidently with
others
but are confused and unsure of how to speak and act in your name.
Forgive us Lord.

Words of Assurance

Remember... “God makes us alive with Christ.
God forgives us all our sins. God has nailed them to the cross.”
(Adapted from Col. 2:13b and 14)

Hymns of Confession

- STJ 81* Take, O take me as I am
HWB 144 Kyrie eleison

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

Scripture

The theme text is Colossians 3:15-17

- Option 1: Read the text in readers' theatre form:
Reader 1: And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts,
Reader 2: to which indeed you were called in the one body.
Reader 3: And be thankful.
Reader 2: Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly;
Reader 1: teach and admonish one another in all wisdom;
Reader 3: and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns,
and spiritual songs to God.
Reader 2: And whatever you do, in word or deed,
Reader 1: do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus,
Reader 3: giving thanks to God the Father through him.
- Option 2: Scripture memory - During the Assembly's morning worship, the gathered assembly will memorize the scripture passage using actions. These actions will be posted in a video clip on the Mennonite Church Canada website following the Assembly.

Sermon Starter

The evening worship services of the Assembly will invite worshippers to a journey of faith in Jesus Christ. We will begin with John the Baptist's doubts about Jesus (Matthew 3:13-17, Matthew 11:2-6) and proceed to the confession of the disciples (John 6:60-69) and then to the proclamation of the early church (Acts 4:1-31).

Preachers may wish to craft their sermons along the same path. In doing so, one can admit that we have, and have had, our doubts about Jesus (i.e. unanswered prayers, life circumstances that bring suffering...etc.), but when we struggle, we can cling to the confession that Jesus has 'words of eternal life', and then pray for boldness in declaring the fullness of the gospel to those around us and to all people.

Passages like Colossians 3:15-17 are the core of being people on such a faith journey. This text can instruct the internal life and experience of the congregation by meshing instruction, mutual care, and worship. Most importantly, the scattered experience of the church, yes, all of life, can be experienced as shaped and hallowed by the one whose name Christians bear. (See Believers Church Bible Commentary - Colossians/Philemon, pg. 170.) A faithful church in its scattered and gathered reality *lives* out of the name (John 15:16) of the Lord Jesus.

Children's Time

Welcome the children and help them settle into a worshipful mood by modeling it and asking the congregation to sing a short worship song, such as "Jesus, be the center," to help set the mood.

Living into Good Words

Do you have a favourite word? Do you sometimes have a word for the day or a word for the week at school? What does your teacher do with this word? Does she or he use it in lots of different places until you all recognize it, and can spell it? That's a lot like it is when we learn to talk, except then, there's no need for a teacher.

When two-year-old Clara learns a new word, she uses it again and again, until the word is inside her. She likes using her new words. The grown-ups in her family like it when she learns new words, so they repeat her new words, with big smiles on their faces. And they help her say the new word more by saying it clearly each time she tries to make those sounds.

It's almost the same when she learns a new action, like jumping off the stairs. She does it again, and again and again, until she's really tired and decides to do something else. But the grown-ups don't jump as much as she does, because they get tired more easily.

Clara likes practicing new words and new actions because that's how they become a part of her. I think there's a clue for understanding the Bible verses we've been practicing. In the middle of the words we've been using actions to help us learn, it says "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." Dwell means live. Let the word of Christ live in you, and not just a little bit, but richly, like Clara's new words or a word of the week, until you recognize it, know what it means, how to spell it and how to do it.

When we practice the words of Christ, when we try to learn them with the actions, and when we try to do what they mean, God smiles at us, and helps us learn them, a lot like the grown-ups who smile and repeat what little Clara says, or like the teacher who helps you learn a word of the week.

The Words of Christ are really good words to have fun learning because they fill us with really good ideas and feelings. Feelings that grow in us when we learn and practice the words of Christ are peace and thankfulness, because Christ shows us the great big goodness and peace of God, and that's a really good thing. Let's say thank you for that now.

Prayer

Thank you God, for sending us Jesus Christ, and for the really good words and actions that we can learn from him. Thank you for being happy when we learn these good things. You are such a good and loving God. Amen.

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

Offering Hymns

STJ 14 Lord Jesus, you shall be my song

HWB 505 I am thine, O Lord

HWB 512 If all you want, Lord

Peace Prayer – Rick Heppner-Mueller,

contact Rick for the music at: rickhm@mciblues.net

HWB 227 Two fishermen

Congregational Prayer

Lead your congregation in a prayer that is composed from the perspective of its participation in Mennonite Church Canada and responds to your congregation's particular needs. Perhaps you are thankful for the hymn books, Sunday School curriculum, or Mennonite Church Canada's Resource Centre. Perhaps you are grateful for the many Witness workers that we together send to far-away places; perhaps one of those Witness workers is from your congregation. Perhaps you have experienced a guest speaker from Mennonite Church Canada, or listened to a *Church Matters* podcast, or maybe your congregation has sent volunteers to accomplish tasks on behalf of the Canada-wide church.

Songs of Sending

Go in peace – Loretta Friesen and Dianna Epp-Fransen, 2003
(www.campswithmeaning.org/summer/music/music.php)

STJ 2 Hamba nathi (Come, walk with us)

STS 40 Som'landela (We will follow)

STJ 95 I want to walk as a child of the light

HWB 428 Lord, let us now depart in peace

Sending

And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. (Colossians 3:17, NRSV)

Abbreviations:

HWB – Hymnal Worship Book

STJ – Sing the Journey

STS – Song the Story

Sunday School Promotion Sunday, September 12, 2010

Passing on the Faith

By Abe Bergen

The following worship service has been written to celebrate the beginning of the new church school year. Please use it as is or adapt to fit your congregation.

Call to Worship:

Leader This is the day that the Lord has made

Congregation: Let us be glad and rejoice in it.

Leader This is a day of new beginnings – new classes, new teachers, new lessons.

Congregation: We are grateful for new beginnings.

Leader This is a day to commit to new learning opportunities, to open our minds and our hearts to what God wants us to learn.

Congregation: We are grateful for new learning opportunities.

Leader This is the day that the Lord has made.

Congregation: We are glad and rejoice in it.

Hymn: Sing Praise to God who reigns, HWB #59

Scripture: Psalm 1:1-3

Hymn: O God, your constant care, HWB #481

Scripture: Luke 2:41-52

Message: Passing on the Faith

“And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favour.” (v. 52)

Hymn: Teach me, O Lord, HWB #487

A Service of Dedication:

Leader: Passing on the faith is an important calling. Our relationship with God existed before birth and can continue to be nurtured in many and unique ways throughout one’s lifetime. This lifelong journey is nurtured when the congregation and home become intentional in teaching, modeling, and encouraging all in their faith journey.

Congregation: We are grateful for the freedom and opportunity we have to nurture faith. We confess that we often take this privilege for granted and become lax in our expectations and efforts. Forgive us for not making faith nurture a priority in our homes and congregations.

Leader: The congregation and the home intentionally partner together to shape faith in people of all ages.

Persons living in households: We need the congregation to train, support, and provide spiritual care for us as we attempt to follow Christ faithfully in our homes and daily life.

Christian Educators (teachers, education committee members, club leaders, etc.) Because it takes more than Sundays alone to grow in relationship with God, we need homes to partner with us in this task by taking time for God every day of the week.

Leader: The congregation has a primary role to strengthen and support families and households in their faith-shaping responsibilities.

Christian Educators: We will teach with passion and conviction. We will do our best as we prepare our lessons. We will strive to get to know our students and engage them in the learning process.

Children and Youth: We will respect our teachers and look forward to learning about God and God’s ways for us.

Young Adults and Adults: We will respect our teachers and risk learning in ways that help us to grow as Christian disciples.

Leader: The Christian home has the primary responsibility to form faith in children and youth.

Parents of Children and Youth: We accept this awesome responsibility and commit ourselves to share our faith with our children and teenagers. We will talk about God when we are at home and when we are away – at mealtime, at bedtime, during car time, during playtime, during sick time – anytime and all the time.

Leader: A vibrant lifelong faith is nurtured when we celebrate God’s activity in the world through corporate and personal worship; as we participate in congregational life, God’s gathered community; as we interpret God’s Word through reflection, exploration and discovery, and as we join in God’s activity in the world by serving others in acts of compassion, peace and justice.

All: And God calls us to a lifelong adventure. This year we want to commit ourselves to growing in our understanding of that call and living out that calling in ordinary and extraordinary ways.

Closing Prayer:

God, we thank you for calling us as partners in this important endeavour of nurturing faith in each child, teen, young adult, and adult present here. Thank you for Christian educators who give of their time and talent to teach others. Thank you for parents who have laid a

foundation of faith through their modeling and sharing. Thank you for our church leaders who provide curriculum and training opportunities for our congregations. Bless all our efforts – both individual and corporate – so that many will grow in their commitment to you. Amen.

World Communion Sunday, October 3rd, 2010

Introduction: World Communion Sunday is an opportunity for the wider Christian Church to move beyond historical and theological differences and worship together in active hope of genuine unity in Christ. It is a Sunday where we try to lower the walls that separate our communion tables of one denomination from those of another.

The Scriptures set out in the lectionary for October 3rd remind us of the struggle for justice in our world. Specifically, the readings invite us to think deeply about how God's people ought to respond to wrongdoing. You are invited to come to the Lord's table on this day as a sign of your confidence in Christ's peacemaking, rejoicing that in his life, death, and resurrection, Jesus has torn down the dividing wall of hostility, reconciling us in his own body (Ephesians 2:14-16).

Lectionary Texts this Sunday:

Habakkuk 1:1-4; 2:1-4; Psalm: 37:1-9; 2 Timothy 1:1-14; Luke 17:5-10

Sermon Ideas

- The prophet Habakkuk laments that you can't count on the courts to bring about justice. In his day – and we might argue in ours – the legal system was painfully frustrating as cases got bogged down and drawn out to the point where it no longer was about truth-finding and right-making. It is exciting to note the trust expressed by Habakkuk who dares to tell God how he really feels, even at the risk of implying that God isn't doing a very good job standing up for the few righteous people left in Judah. The prophet sets us an example to follow as he prays out his frustration and then takes up a position in the watchtower. Deep down he knows God has heard his prayer and will prove faithful to address the wrongs committed.
- The Psalmist also recognizes the anger, injustice, and the failure to address it that this generates. But he invites us to let it go, and leave it with God who can be trusted to redeem and restore. We should not only wait and watch for the Lord, but that we also should be found faithfully going about the ways of God, doing good. Tell about the long-suffering approach David took with Saul who was trying to kill him (1 Samuel 24, 26), and how it did much to shame and convict his adversary, while also winning David much support from the people.

One might also tell the story of Abigail (1 Samuel 25) who helped David turn aside from exacting justice upon her husband for Nabal's extreme rudeness. Offer some present day examples of people who returned good for evil, and who waited on God to direct the outcome.

- Paul's letter to Timothy calls us to be people of grace, mercy, and peace, imitating Christ who courageously spoke truth to lies, but did so from a position of vulnerability that the world thought was weak. Unashamed of our powerlessness, we find our confidence in God's power displayed through absolute trust even from a prison cell.
- Lastly, in the gospel reading we hear from Jesus. His disciples appear stunned at the Master's instruction to forgive someone his/her sins even as many as seven times in one day. "Increase our faith!" they respond, making it clear how unattainable this response to injustice feels. But the Lord replies that it's not as impossible as you think. The barriers injustice creates can be uprooted and tossed into the sea by calling on God. It's not about the quantity of faith you have, or according to how much you think you deserve God's help. In this case, attitude is everything – full, complete, yielding. There is a cost in giving up our right to exact a pound of flesh from those who sin against us. Like the disciples, we struggle with letting go, and find it unappealing to absorb or suffer the debt of another's sin(s). Jesus invites us to look at it from a different perspective, directing us to remember the relationship we have with God, and to trust it. We are to go about our work, accepting that our first priority is to serve God and not defend ourselves. As the parable states, we will get our chance to eat (we will get justice). What stories could you tell from within your community where someone chose to let go of the right to sue, in order to bear witness to God's Lordship through weakness?

Children's Story: See the Lectionary children's story on Luke 17:5-10 at www.mennonitechurch.ca/resourcecentre/ResourceView/23/6796, and The Lectionary Story Bible Cycle C, by Ralph Milton, Woodlake Publishing, 2009, p 205, for a story on 2 Timothy 1:1-14.

Call to Worship:

Leader: Trust in the Lord and do good, and he will help you.

People: But wherever I look, I see destruction and violence. I am surrounded by people who love to argue and fight.

Leader: Be still in the presence of the Lord; wait patiently for him to act.

People: I will climb up to my watchtower and stand at my guardpost. There I will wait to see how the Lord will answer my complaint.

Leader: Don't worry about the wicked or envy those who do wrong.

**All: Show us Lord, how to increase our faith!
May justice and mercy shine forth like the
noonday sun.**

Invocation:

Dear God, we have come to praise and thank you for what you have done in our lives. Through your Son Jesus you have made us one with you, bestowing mercy, granting us second chances and power from above to live in right ways. You are just, and promise help for the oppressed. You sustain all who wait on your Word.

In gratitude for all that we have received, we pray that you would renew our sense of oneness with all followers of Jesus. Where there are rifts and barriers, we pray for grace and understanding. Send your Holy Spirit among us and bring the light of your Word to instruct, heal, and inspire.

Bless the worship we bring today, and by the presence of your holiness and power in this place, shape who we are, deepening our love across the many tables of communion in the Church worldwide. Let it be truly said of our fellowship and love for one another that we are indeed Jesus' disciples.

To your honour, glory, and praise! AMEN!

Confession and Assurance:

Dear God, we humbly confess that misunderstandings and wrongdoings, matched with an unwillingness to forgive, and anger-driven attempts at justice, have mired us down, weakened our health, and dimmed our witness to your grace and power.

We are more conformed to the world than we like to admit, often looking first to lawyers and courts to settle our disputes. We tarnish your name and diminish the Gospel's reputation of achieving justice through humility and weakness.

Forgive our timidity and embarrassment about the way of the

cross. Help us believe again that its power is shown through love; that reconciliation is still achieved through long-suffering. (pause)

Lord, we thank you for your faithfulness and open arms of mercy, and for the wide scope of your justice. Purify us from all unrighteousness.

Remind us again of the spiritual gifts you have given us – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Help us open ourselves to your holy breath that blow upon their embers and rekindles their fire within us. Help their light shine through us as a witness to Christ's way to lasting peace and reconciliation.

In Jesus' name, we pray. AMEN.

Litany for Communion:

Leader: Dear God, You invite us to come and eat at this table that has been prepared for us – food and drink; reminders of nourishment and the blessing of fellowship.

People: You bid us come, but our feet are heavy, our spirits hesitant. Who all will be there? Some who've criticized us? Others we've passed judgment on?

Voice 1: How awkward, even unnerving, to celebrate unity within the diversity of Christian faith when it seems so superficial.

Voice 2: How do you, Lord, see past our inflated senses of superiority, and the doubts we have in each other's integrity and beliefs?

Voice 1: How is it you ask us in when our arms are full of grudges and complaints?

Leader: Jesus said: "Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to." (Luke 13:24)

Voice 2: You want us to let it all go – to leave behind all our "right" answers and the "right" we have to sue those who have sinned against us. That's asking a lot.

People: Lord, with the faith that we have, as little as it may be, toss our deeply rooted prejudices and fellowship-killing stereotypes aside, that we may come into your banquet through the narrow door, and be at peace with all whom you have drawn in.

Leader: Bless this bread and drink, and let it inspire us to imitate Jesus' choice to lay down everything, even his life, to hold your love and welcome out to all.

All: May this communion be ours to enact with all followers of Christ in the worldwide Church. Fill us, Lord, with your Spirit, and with your joy. Make us one body, one light, one united witness. To the glory of your Name we ask it. AMEN.

Communion: Reflect unity and diversity in this celebration of World Communion Sunday by serving a loaf of bread made up of many clusters. Some bakeries even make a cluster using a variety of bread types (e.g. egg, pumpernickel, white, whole-wheat).



Alternately, consider using a loaf where the dough is braided, symbolizing the weaving together of many expressions of discipleship that are all made one in Christ.

Benediction: Colossians 3:16-18

Songs:

Communion

- HWB 452 Ubi caritas et amor
- HWB 459 I come with joy to meet my Lord
- HWB 461 In the quiet consecration
- HWB 465 Here, O my Lord, I see thee

- HWB 475 Become to us the living bread
- STS 34 You are holy
- STS 60 Come to me, come to me
- STS 77 Here is the bread
- STS 123 Let us talents and tongues employ

Unity/Praising

- 334 Christ is the world's true light
- 322 For we are strangers no more
- 454 Seed, scattered and sown
- 15 O Prince of peace
- 311 The Church's one foundation
- 306 In Christ there is no East or West

Sending

- STS 119 We believe, as one by one

This worship resource, edited by Elsie Rempel, was prepared for Mennonite Church Canada by Don Penner, Pastor of Wanner Mennonite Church, Cambridge Ontario.

Direct your comments about Special Sunday Worship Resources to Elsie Rempel at erempel@mennonitechurch.ca.

Heritage Sunday, October 31, 2010

Introduction:

These worship resources are designed to assist you in planning for worship on Heritage Sunday. This special Sunday focuses on the spiritual heritage of the church and helps us remember the testimony of those who are now “saints above.” In the process, we can emphasize the relevance of the Anabaptist roots of the Mennonite Church for the life of the church today. Their example can inspire us to live faithfully out of that tradition and leave a legacy of faithfulness for future generations.

The early Anabaptists lived with the constant threat to their safety and learned to trust God’s wisdom, providence and care in the midst of the persecutions they endured. After the Russian Revolution, almost 100 years ago, the Mennonites in Russia were confronted with widespread injustice and senseless violence throughout the 1920s and 1930s. The diaries and letters of those who survived those tumultuous years describe the helpless cries for justice, as they endured the forced collectivization, starvation, and banishment to Siberia. At the same time, there was an amazing display of faith in God’s providential care – a faith that carried people through the endless days and months and even years of hardship and persecution. That same faith was at work in Canada as well in the conscientious objectors during World Wars 1 and 2. Their stories reveal faith and courage in the face of challenge and hardship that resulted from taking an unpopular stance during a time of war. Similarly, God’s people in the Old Testament faced widespread injustice and impending occupation by foreign powers and had to wrestle with God’s call to live by faith and wait for vindication by God, at God’s time.

From all these witnesses we can learn that, in the midst of chaos, faith in God’s righteousness and timing can thrive. Many Mennonites who have lived in Canada all of their lives, do not know what it is like to live out faith in the midst of over-encompassing injustice. Most of us do not know what it is like to wonder aloud why God tolerates the evil and violence around us. May the stories in this worship resource help us appreciate our heritage and help us stand in solidarity with God’s children who suffer injustice today.

Theme: God calls us, as disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ, to live by faith, to delight in God’s commands, and serve

as instruments of grace and transformation in the face of injustice.

Suggested Bible Texts: Habakkuk 1:1-4, 2:1-4; Psalm 119:137-144; II Thessalonians 1:1-4, 11-12; and Luke 19:1-10.

Suggested Hymns:

HWB 328 O God, our help in ages past
HWB 327 Great is thy faithfulness
HWB 370 O day of God, draw nigh
STJ 65 Let justice flow like streams
Faithful One by Brian Doerksen

Call to Worship: (congregational responses appear in bold print)

You are righteous, O Lord,
And your judgments are right.

**You have appointed your decrees in righteousness
And in all faithfulness.**

Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness
And your law is truth.

**Your decrees are righteous forever;
Give us understanding that we may live.**

Prayers of Confession:

God of the future, you grant visions and dreams
to those who look to your Spirit for guidance,
who incline their ears to hear your Word anew.
You sustain with your power all who purpose to follow you.
Grateful for our strong and wide heritage,
staked out by men and women of courage and faith,
we have been afraid to step out like they did,
when your Spirit urges your people further forward.

Forgive our fear of where you may lead,
and of what you may require of us.
Open our hearts and eyes to a fresh vision of Jesus,
who ever leads us forward into your coming kingdom.

Confession of Sin:

HWB 701

Offering:

HWB 750

Children's Time:

For Children's resources see:

Hide and See - www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1374

Love your Enemies - www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1375

Key Bible Passage: Luke 19:1-10

Sermon Prompts:

Outline:

1. Injustice and pain is a part of life; there will be times when we cry out to God for deliverance. (See Habakkuk 1:1-4, II Thessalonians 1:1-4, 11-12, and stories below.)
2. In the midst of injustice, God call's us to live lives of faith. (Habakkuk 2:4, Psalm 119:143, and the stories below.)
3. God will hear our cries for deliverance. (God will be faithful: a) in his own time: Habakkuk 2:3, and b) in his own way: Luke 19:1-10.)
4. We are called to be messengers of God's grace and transformation in the face of injustice.

Notes:

The prophet **Habakkuk** wrote his book during the 7th century BCE, just before the siege of Babylon and the capture of Jerusalem. Doubt and fear gripped Judah, and many wondered where God was in the midst of the turmoil that swirled around them. The country was plagued by injustice and, seemingly, God was not willing to intervene and punish the evil doers.

The Mennonites who lived in Russia during the 1917 revolution and resulting civil war voiced many of the same sentiments as they faced anarchy and injustice. Entries from diaries and letters written during these days are often painful to read, and seem to echo the words of Habakkuk. Here are sample entries from the diary of **Katherina Janzen Enns**:

March 31, 1920: "I am so upset I can hardly write. Oh, how much suffering is there in the world?"

April 1, 1920: "Oh if only a peaceful time would come, if the Lord would provide it."

April 12, 1920: "If only we could have a stable government again – so that we could keep what we have and they wouldn't take away even our cows from us. May God make it so that they withdraw – these communists."

May 20, 1920: "Many tears were shed . . . So many have

been killed. It is so sad, all the things they have destroyed. They burned such nice homes. There are so many who must borrow clothes just to go to church."

June 16, 1920: "We work and work, only to have it taken away. But the Lord will not put a greater burden on us than we deserve."

June 28, 1920: "Oh we long so much for a different time, but when will that ever happen?"

July 26, 1920: "When will we ever have a Sunday where we can go to a gathering? It seems everything is dead. I am getting really frightened about it. It can't stay this way. The dead must arise. Yet we all sleep as though we were dead."

May 26, 1920: "These are very unsettled times we live in. We are never certain if they will take everything away. But today I read a very profound chapter where Jesus himself says, 'Not one hair shall fall from your head without his will.' With this we can be completely comforted."

Today, some Mennonites whose parents and grandparents experienced injustice and persecution in the former Soviet Union have returned to Ukraine and Russia to restore some of the church buildings and other institutional structures that once served as places of ministry. The Mennonite Centre in Molochansk, Ukraine is an example of how Russian Mennonites are now seeking to minister to the people of Ukraine. While it is tempting to forget the pain and sadness that the former Soviet Union held for many of them, these people have responded to a call that God has placed on their lives. They have chosen to bring a message of hope and reconciliation to an area where people of their faith once experienced injustice and sorrow.

Sam Martin applied, but was denied Conscientious Objector status in Brooks, Alberta, on April 19, 1944. He was sentenced to thirty days in the provincial jail, and was then handed over to the military. When he was issued a uniform, he refused to wear it, and was sentenced to a military prison. Treatment was sadistic. Here are a few excerpts from his story.

"When Sam arrived, in handcuffs, on May 25, the Regimental Sergeant Major showered him with bitter invectives, snarling, "You will wear a uniform! I am in charge here, and there has never been a person under my control whom I haven't been able to break! Take off your civilian clothes and put on an army uniform or go naked!"

"Sit," Sam quietly replied, "I refuse to serve in the army. I am a conscientious objector, and I will not wear the uniform."... Sam's civilian clothes were taken away...When the guards

noticed that he still would not put on the uniform, they turned off the heat in his cell...In addition he was placed in solitary confinement...Gradually Sam became despondent. He imagined that everyone had forgotten him, that no one cared....In reality, Sam's family and church...prayed for him constantly. ...

In mid April, 1946, ...he was formally discharged,...[with] the note "Twenty-three months non-effective service."

In reflecting on his stand forty-five years later, Mr. Martin says,Through this experience I received an understanding of what it means to be the church that has never left me. It is much more than an association of people. It is a body and when one member suffers, the whole body suffers....I am also indebted to some government officials such as the prison warden at Lethbridge." From *Sam Martin Went to Prison*, by William Janzen & Frances Greaser, © 1990 Mennonite Central Committee, (13-33).

Sending:

Eternal God,
as we leave this place of worship,
help us to live lives of faith
in the midst of injustice and pain.

Grant us the patience to wait upon you,
knowing that at the appointed time
and in your own way
you will reconcile all things to you, through Jesus Christ,
our Lord. AMEN

Resources:

Call to Worship: Liturgy, Music, Preaching & The Arts. Year C: Lectionary Aids for 2003-2004. Volume 37.1 (2003-2004).

Enns, Katherina Janzen. *Tagebuch: A Diary of Katherina Janzen Enns (1876-1934) kept between February 14th, 1920 and April 10th, 1924.* Rosetta Projects, 2008.

Janzen, William & Greaser, Frances: *Sam Martin Went to Prison: the story of Conscientious Objection and Canadian Military Service*, © 1990 Mennonite Central Committee, assigned to Kindred Press, (13-33).

Soards, Marion, Thomas Dozeman, and Kendall McCabe. *Preaching the Revised Common Lectionary: Year C, After Pentecost 2.* Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994.

This particular worship resource was prepared for Mennonite Church Canada by Richard Thiessen, Library Director, Columbia Bible College, Abbotsford, BC, and edited by Elsie Rempel, Director of Christian Nurture.

Direct your comments about Special Sunday Worship Resources to Elsie Rempel at erempel@mennonitechurch.ca.

Mission Sunday, November 14, 2010

Note to Ryan: Both the long version and the short version can be offered on line. Only the short version should be made available in Hard Copy format. - dan

This worship resource, edited by Elsie Rempel, has been prepared on behalf of Mennonite Church Canada by Tobia Vandenberg Veith, Witness worker in Macau, S.A.R., China, and Melissa Miller, pastor of Springstein Mennonite Church, Manitoba.

God's Kingdom Quilt: Be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating

Introduction

These worship resources are designed to assist you in planning for worship on Mission Sunday. The focus of this special Sunday is on the mission of God in the world, through the church, a mission to which all are called, all are equipped, and all are sent.

The scripture texts proclaim God's marvelous works – acts of creativity and redemption – and God's invitation to join in that work. As we studied the scriptures, and witnessed God's activities in our contexts, an image of a quilter God presented itself. The theme, "God's Kingdom Quilt: be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating," pairs this image with words in Isaiah 65:18.

Imagine God's work in the world as the making of a gorgeous kingdom quilt of varied colours and designs. God delightfully invites us to join in and work along on a "patch" by tending, snipping, and stitching the "patch" of fabric given to us. Tobia is working with God on a kingdom quilt patch in Macau, a busy casino city in Asia. Melissa, meanwhile, is working on a kingdom quilt patch in a rural prairie church at Springstein, Manitoba.

On Mission Sunday, **celebrate** God's Kingdom quilt. **Remember** your congregation's participation in God's quilt-making. **Listen** for the sound of God's call to mission work near and far, and recommit to the project. We hope this resource will assist congregations to gain an appreciation of how our "quilting" reflects our partnership with a gracious and creative God. Our "quilting" finds its place in the whole quilt God is designing. May this realization lead us to burst forth in praise, "Wow! Good on you, God!" Words and music

from around the world have been recommended for this service, to help us hear the sounds of the many places God is at work.

See electronic version of this document at:
www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1339

Scripture Texts:

Isaiah 65:1-25; Psalm 98; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13; Luke 21:5-19

Suggested Hymns:

From **Hymnal Worship Book (HWB)**

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 35 | Many and great, O God |
| 76 | Je louerai l'Éternel (Praise, I will praise you, Lord) |
| 150 | Wonderful grace of Jesus |
| 160 | God created heaven and earth |
| 323 | Beyond a dying sun |
| 367 | For the healing of the nations |
| 397 | God loves all his many people |
| 400 | Santo, santo, santo |
| 401 | This little light of mine |

From **Sing the Journey (STJ)**

- | | |
|----|--|
| 14 | Lord Jesus, you shall be my song |
| 27 | God of the Bible |
| 42 | Listen, God is calling |
| 78 | Sizohamba naye (We will walk with God) |

From **Sing the Story (STS)**

- | | |
|-----|-------------------------------|
| 64 | There is a well (Un pozo hay) |
| 65 | Abre mis ojos (Open my eyes) |
| 114 | God has chosen me |

Invocation

Wonderful God, we gather to sing your praises and to offer our heartfelt thanks for your steadfast love and mercy. We bow in awe before your love and care, for the people of the earth and all of creation. We marvel at your creative Spirit at work in the tiniest of plants and the towering mountains, in the little corners where we live and in the farthest galaxy. Come now, and send your word into our hearts. Shape and enliven our partnership with you. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord and friend, we pray. Amen.

Call to Worship (based on Psalm 98)

All: Oh, sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things.

Right: Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises.

Left: Sing praises to the Lord with the lyre, with the lyre and the sound of melody.

All: With trumpets and the sound of the horn make a joyful noise before the King, the Lord.

Right: Let the sea roar, and all that fills it; the world and those who live in it.

Left: Let the floods clap their hands; let the hills sing together for joy at the presence of the Lord

Right: for he is coming to judge the earth.

Left: He will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with equity.

All: Oh, sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things.

Prayer of Confession

Faithful God, we confess that when you call out to us, we ignore your voice. And when you come to us, we turn away. Too often, we are rebellious, or unfaithful, or lazy. Forgive us, we pray, and give us new eyes to see your work and new strength to join in your creation.

Assurance of Pardon

Hear these words of assurance:

I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind. I delight in my people. Therefore be glad and rejoice forever. – from Isaiah 65:17-19a

Children's Time: God says, "Look what I am creating! Come and help!"

Gathering Activity:

(If possible, bring a quilt that several people made together or download a photo of a quilt made by a group of children and adults at the 2004 Mennonite Church Canada Assembly at www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1341)

Welcome the children and invite them to settle into comfortable positions. Introduce them to today's topic with questions such as: What kinds of things do you like to create or make? What kinds of things are fun to make **together**? (baking a cake, making a meal, painting a big mural, sewing a quilt.)

Show them a quilt that a few people made together (show quilt or photo of quilt) and describe how each person embroidered on (or created) a patch and then they sewed them together.

Explain that this reminds you of how God is at work in the world, making many good and different things that fit together. Ask them to close their eyes and imagine all the good and different things that God is doing as a gorgeous kingdom quilt with many colours and patterns. After a short imaginative silence, begin the story.

Story:

God says to us, "Look what I am creating together with my people!" Let's look at this patch from far away in Macau.

Mandy goes to school in Macau. Macau is a tiny country close to China. During Grades 4, 5, and 6, Mandy had a number of friends at school. Sometimes they were nice to her, but most of the time they were mean to her. Mary often bossed Mandy around, and blamed her for things that went wrong. When Mandy told her mom about it, she sometimes cried. Because Mandy loved and followed Jesus, she decided to keep being kind to Mary, even though it was really hard. In Grades 7 and 8, Mandy and Mary were finally in different classes. That made school easier for Mandy. After awhile, Mary said to Mandy, "I was so mean to you but you stayed so kind. Why?" Mandy took this opportunity to introduce Mary to Jesus as the one who helped Mandy stay kind when Mary picked on her. Mandy was sewing with God on her patch in God's kingdom quilt.

God says to us, "Look what I am creating together with my people!" Let's look at this patch from Springstein, a prairie village in Manitoba.

Kathy was a youth pastor at a rural prairie church. One day, the mother of a youth Kathy pastored approached her with an idea. Her idea was that the youth group could make a quilt, guided and taught by the "sewing ladies" of the church, who met regularly to make blankets for MCC. The youth would then transport the blanket by walking overnight from the church to the relief sale location, a distance of 82 kilometres. What an idea! And it happened.

A quilting rack was set up in the fellowship hall of the church. For over six months, the youth, their families, and older women met to quilt, and to share stories and snacks. On the night before the sale, the youth (with some of their parents in vans as escorts) and Kathy walked through the night carrying the quilt. As they walked, they thought of the many displaced people around the world, some of whom need to walk at night to escape danger, some of whom will receive blankets through MCC. (That year's relief sale focused on refugees.)

As a secret from Kathy, the church had arranged to buy back the quilt and give it to her. She treasured its beauty for a number of years. When she learned of a refugee family new to her community who needed such a quilt, she passed it on to

them with a glad heart. This church and Kathy were working at God's quilt with a real quilt!

God says to us, "Look what I am creating together with my people!" Let's look at this patch from Didsbury, a village in southern Alberta.

A few years ago, the Veiths, Mennonite Church Canada workers to Macau, were back in Canada living in rural Alberta for a year. Near the end of the year, a group of children, youth, and adults from Didsbury Bergthal Mennonite Church started on a quilt project. Each person received a cloth square to embroider with a flower and a virtue, like love or patience. The Veith children, Michael and Marika Veith, who were 6 and 8 years old, got squares, too. When the embroidery was done, someone sewed the patches together and sewed a border around them. Then the group got together to tie the quilt. What Michael and Marika didn't know was that when the Veiths left Didsbury to go to Macau, the group presented the quilt as a gift to the Veiths to take with them. The quilt became a link between here and there, a reminder that we all have a part in working with God creating the Kingdom quilt.

God says to us, "Look what I am creating together with my people!"

Wondering questions:

- I wonder what God is creating here in our church and neighbourhood.
- I wonder what part of God's Kingdom quilt you are being invited to join.

Prayer: God, we are glad about what you are creating, here, in _____, Macau, in Springstein, in Didsbury, and all over the world. Thank you for inviting us to join in. Please show us our part. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Response: Before the children return to their parents, pass out small crayon packs to each child and a paper quilt square to colour in the way they choose. Those who can write may include one word about how they can help God in the middle of the quilt square. After the service, they can give them to the storyteller to arrange and post in church in the shape of a quilt.

Additional Stories from God's Quilt:

1. The Macau Mennonite Church (in Macau, China) is like a big family. Sandy loves to hang out there, especially since her home is so small and her family is small, just her mom and younger brother. The pastors, "Chow Tai" and "Chow Sang" or Mrs. Chow and Mr. Chow, have become like an aunt and uncle to Sandy. One time Sandy had a scary dream

that a friend was leading her down darker and darker alleys to the doorway of a frightening person. Scared, she woke up and ran to the church (it was actually late Sunday morning). She was so happy to see everyone, and the Chows welcomed her, even though the church service was over. Later, she said how glad she was that God had used that dream to show her she needed to be careful what kind of friends she would hang out with. God used the dream as a loving warning, kind of like a dad would. With God's dream and the care of Pastors Chow, Sandy has experienced God's love and care. Now, she is showing that kind of love and care to other youth who don't know Jesus yet. Pastors Chow and Sandy are sewing with God on their patch in God's kingdom quilt.

2. It was a good year for the farmers around **Springstein**. At the church's annual meeting, people learned they had \$3000 leftover from their budget. What to do with the extra money? One person said, "I believe that we pass on that money. It's like a gift we weren't counting on, so we should share it with others outside of our church." Other people nodded in agreement. Soon a plan was in place. The money would be used as "seed money" to grow wheat, and earn money for the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. The Mennonite farmers asked their neighbours in other churches – Catholic, Lutheran and United – to join in. And they all said yes. That spring, eighty acres of land was seeded in wheat, which sprouted, grew, and ripened under the warm prairie sky.

On a warm August Sunday, 200 people from the churches and community gathered on the wheat field for a worship service. They came to celebrate the harvest and say thank you to God. Four huge combines were parked on the field, adding to the atmosphere. When the harvest was completed a few days later, 76 metric tonnes of wheat filled the bins, valued at \$20,500. After setting aside money for expenses, and combined with government support, the funds directed to Canadian Foodgrains Bank amounted to \$60,000, a big growth from the original seed money. Sometimes God's people work on God's quilt in a wheat field!

3. Ray Dirks is an artist who joins in with what God is doing in various places in the world, including at home in **Winnipeg!** As a boy growing up in British Columbia, Ray knew his main gift was to create art. However, it took him years to accept that art could be a calling to work with God, because when Ray was young, Mennonites didn't usually think of art as a way of serving God. As a young man, he finally decided to focus on his gift of creating art and started art school in Vancouver. After that, he went to Zaire (Congo) in Africa to work as an illustrator, creating pictures for books, posters, and magazines. Since then, he has worked with art and artists in 30 countries.

About twenty years ago, Ray started relating to newcomer immigrants and refugees in Winnipeg. These newcomers came from many of the places he had worked and often found it hard to tell their stories. Talking in their new language, English, was hard enough. Talking about their joys and painful stories from their homelands was even harder.

With some artist friends, Ray decided to hold art workshops for these newcomers. Providing materials, tools and some pointers, Ray got them started on creating their own works of art. He began by talking about himself, what he believes, his roots, and his home culture. He told them that he, too, came from a refugee past because his grandparents were newcomers to Canada, like them. Then, he would invite the newcomers to create artworks based on their memories, faith and family. When they finished, he asked them to share about what they had created. Suddenly the stories, the feelings, and even tears began to come. These newcomers began to experience meaningful connections here in their new home country. Ray is “sewing” with God on his patch in God’s big Kingdom quilt!

Sermon Notes

1. **God’s saving activity** can be likened to a huge quilt that God is making, involving people and creation all around the world. Our mission efforts are prompted by God’s initiating activity. Take note of the scripture references to God’s activity. **Isaiah 65** – God is eager to be found, brings new life and health, creates joy and delight, and brings peace in creation. All of these activities are ways God is creating a new heaven and a new earth. **Psalms 98** – God has done marvelous things, remembered his steadfast love, and judges with righteousness and equity. **Luke 21** – God gives us strength and wisdom when we are betrayed and persecuted.

2. We are invited and **compelled to join in** God’s mission. Such an invitation is a gift and a blessing. Note scripture references to our response. From **Psalms 98**, we get a sense of joyful praise. **II Thessalonians 3** includes instructions that we live in ways that promote God’s mission, by not being idle and not being weary in doing what is right. In **Luke 21**, we are told not to be led astray or terrified, but to endure and open ourselves to Jesus’ guidance. Jesus gives us new eyes to see this quilt God is making.

3. Take note of the **context** in which these scriptures were written and the context in which we are responding to God’s mission.

In **Isaiah**, the people were rebuilding after years in exile. They were influenced by their neighbours and acted in ways that God’s prophet judged with strong language. They were rebellious and drawn to false gods and false activities, including hypocrisy, gambling, and sexual sins. Even so, God

reached out to them with promises of peace and restoration. What false gods and false activities are we drawn to? How do we respond to and share God’s promises of peace and restoration?

In **Luke**, Jesus speaks of the destruction of the temple building. Throughout the gospels, Jesus challenges the oppression of the temple system. What oppressive systems are we being called to challenge? What is ending in the way Christian faith has been practiced? How do we see God at work in this time of great change in the Christian church in North America? How do we receive Jesus’ words that we endure, that we not be afraid nor led astray? How do we walk with those Christians who are being persecuted for their faith?

The passage in **II Thessalonians** was written to challenge and encourage the new believers. The fledgling group needed instruction on how to live ethically in response to Jesus’ love and sacrifice. What words of challenge and encouragement are needed in our day and in our place?

For additional stories of God at work in the world through the church, ask around in your congregation, and look at Mennonite Church Canada’s Celebration Stories here: www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/154.

Additional Sermon Notes

Other points of reflection include:

- Create a sermon that captures the excitement, power, and scope of God’s mission.
- In keeping with the theme of God’s kingdom quilt, consider highlighting the artists (musicians, wood workers, quilters, painters, etc.) in the congregation and their way of continuing God’s creative work.
- We draw renewed energy and excitement from the Spirit of God.
- We encourage one another and those working in other places to continue to sew on their patch, stitch by stitch joining with what God is doing to piece together God’s kingdom quilt.
- We find grace for our quilt making in all its imperfection and beauty.
- We lift up those for whom the work is very costly (persecution, suffering).

Words of challenge may include:

- A confession that we have fallen short of God’s design and invitation to join God at work.
- We may be so focused on our own patch that we have neither time, nor interest, nor any idea of what the other patches look like, nor for that matter, what the whole quilt is beginning to look like.

- We may think “my” patch is more important, the best, or the fullest expression of what the quilt is about.
- We may keep looking at someone else’s patch over there and want to hear all about it (wow!), yet allow our own patch to be threadbare because we have ignored God’s invitation to join in the work.

Offering

Creator God, You call us to be glad and rejoice forever in what you are creating. In joy, we offer our time, our gifts, our creativity, our love, and our finances to join in with what you are creating all over the world. Accept our offering, we pray, in the name of Jesus, Amen.

Prayers of the People

Offer the prayers of the people as you usually do or consider this form of prayer. In many Chinese congregations, after sharing thanks and prayer concerns, everybody in the entire congregation prays out loud all at once, lifting up the thanks and concerns of the congregation to God. Such prayers come to a natural finish when the prayers fade into a murmur and the leader raises his voice to close the prayer.

Prayers of the People (extended)

Note: These prayers are adapted from the model used in “Call to Intercession” in *Take our Moments and our Days: An Anabaptist Prayer Book*.

1. You may use the following prayers, adapting them to suit your congregation:

- The pastor or another individual can insert prayers beforehand that reflect the life and concerns of the church and then read the prayers with instruction to the congregation to respond after “In your mercy,” with “Lord, hear our prayer.”

-The pastor or another individual collects the items and the prayer requests of the congregation from a time of sharing in the service and expresses them in the appropriate places.

- A smaller congregation may choose to allow individuals to speak their specific prayers in the spaces allowed.

Prayer

Our loving and faithful God, you call us to join in with you as you are creating your Kingdom, through the power of your Spirit and the life of Christ in us. We are glad and rejoice in what you are creating! Thank you...

(open prayers)

In your mercy, **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Your wells of salvation are brimming with joy. We pray for ourselves...(that we would find your joy to be our strength and not grow weary in well-doing).

(open prayers)

In your mercy, **Lord, hear our prayer.**

You are ready to be found. We pray for our community and for our neighbours...(that your kingdom would come)

(open prayers)

In your mercy, **Lord, hear our prayer.**

You give words and wisdom. We pray for the church in all places, especially our brothers and sisters who experience great cost and suffering as they make known your deeds in the nations.

(open prayers)

In your mercy, **Lord, hear our prayer.**

You judge the earth with righteousness and the earth with equity. We pray for the world, for peacemakers and for all who serve in the name of Christ.

(open prayers)

In your mercy, **Lord, hear our prayer.**

You are present to us in your steadfast love and faithfulness. We offer you other concerns we carry in our hearts.

(open prayers)

In your mercy, **Lord, hear our prayer.**

In the name of the one who taught us to pray . . .

Conclude with the Lord’s prayer (HWB 731)

Benediction

May God, the Creator, Jesus, the Redeemer, and the Spirit of power, strengthen us, grant us peace, and fill us with joy as we join in with God at work in the world. Amen.

Direct your comments about Special Sunday Worship Resources to Elsie Rempel at erempel@mennonitechurch.ca.

